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ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: **Gauguin's *Noa Noa*: Aspects of Narrative in Text and Image**

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Paul Gauguin's novel *Noa Noa* is a fictionalized account of his first Tahitian journey. The artist planned to combine his text with ten woodblock prints, now known as the *Noa Noa Suite*; and he began working on both the text and the images in 1893. The two works were never printed together in the same volume, and no information has been found concerning the placement of images with text. There has been no investigation of the relationship between these images and the written story they were meant to accompany.

This thesis attempts to establish a functional relationship between Gauguin's images and his text and to explore the many different narrative levels employed in *Noa Noa*. Both the text and the images are examined alone to determine how each functions separately as a narrative. Then, when examining the two forms together, the images are each found to connect with a specific

textual passage -- a passage almost always containing references to Gauguin's previous works. This association between text and image creates an entirely new narrative. It is proven that, when writing about his painting, Gauguin created a discourse between image and text that contains a multi-layered reference to himself as a creator. Finally, it is shown that Gauguin combined this intermedia narrative with other, more universal narratives to elevate his own position as a creator.

DEDICATION

**GAUGUIN'S NOA NOA: ASPECTS OF NARRATIVE IN
TEXT AND IMAGE**

by

Amy Elizabeth Day

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of The University of Maryland in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Shortly after returning from his first Tahitian trip,¹ Paul Gauguin began working on a fictionalized account of this journey, entitled *Noa Noa*.² He initially planned to combine this text with ten woodblock prints, now known as the *Noa Noa Suite*; however, due to technical and personal problems, the two works were never printed together in the same volume. No scholarly work has been done on the relationship between these images and the text with which they were intended to be placed.

This thesis will attempt to establish a functional relationship between Gauguin's images and his text. The prints will be examined in conjunction with the first *Noa Noa* manuscript -- the only edition written entirely by Gauguin. The artist, working on both of these at the same time, viewed them as a unit. He used this unit to create a complex level of meaning, a level that functions outside of the ostensible *Noa Noa* story.

Chapter Two will outline the history of *Noa Noa* and clarify the relationship between its various editions. Then the text and images will each be examined alone (in Chapters Three and Four)

¹The artist lived in Tahiti during the years 1891-1893. For information on this trip, see Bengt Danielsson, *Gauguin in the South Seas* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1965).

²*Noa noa* is a Tahitian term that literally translates into the English adjective "fragrant."

to determine how each one functions as a narrative. The visual works will be discussed in relationship to Gauguin's previous works in order to understand their purpose here. Chapter Five will determine the relationship between text and image. The images will each be found to connect with a specific textual passage, and this association between text and image will create a different narrative. Finally, it will be shown that Gauguin combined this intermedia narrative with other, more universal narratives to elevate his own position as a creator.

Narrative theory will be employed in this investigation of *Noa Noa*.³ This thesis is concerned essentially with the many stories the work tells, as well as its method of telling them. We will see that, although the text appears to communicate a simple story, its relationship to the images and to other narratives creates a multi-layered level of meaning.

³Narrative theory is not often used by scholars in the area of Nineteenth Century European Art. This is probably due to the belief that during the nineteenth century visual story-telling, along with representational subject matter, declines and even disappears. Due to this lack of precedents, narratological methodologies must be found in works on other fields. Thus, seminal works on narrative, although not directly related to the subject matter of this study, must be consulted in order to observe various approaches to narrative. For these works, see the Bibliography. For my knowledge and understanding of narrative theory, I am indebted to Marcia Kupfer, whose course on Pictorial Narrative at the University of Maryland during Spring 1990 led to this project.

CHAPTER TWO

A BRIEF HISTORY OF NOA NOA

In a letter of October 1893, Gauguin informed his wife, "Je prépare en outre un livre sur Tahiti et qui sera très utile pour faire comprendre ma peinture. Que de travail."¹ Two months later, he wrote to her, "Merci de ta proposition de venir au Danemarck, mais je suis attaché ici tout l'hiver à un très grand travail Un livre sur mon voyage qui me donne beaucoup de travail."² This livre is *Noa Noa*, the prospective result of the artist's collaboration with the poet Charles Morice.³ The May 13,

¹Paul Gauguin, *Lettres de Gauguin: À sa Femme et à ses Amis*, ed. Maurice Malingue (Paris: Éditions Bernard Grasset, 1946), 249. This letter was written in Paris and sent to Copenhagen where his wife, Mette, was then living.

²Gauguin, *Lettres*, 251.

³Charles Morice was a young poet who was often identified with the Symbolist movement, but who has since received fame only for his connections with Gauguin. As Nicholas Wadley notes, "For Morice the sad outcome has been that a young poet, favoured disciple of Mallarmé, who in 1889 had published a critique of contemporary literature in France that was much acclaimed in Symbolist circles, is now remembered as little more than the intrusive ghost-writing partner in Gauguin's *Noa Noa*. Only in two editions (1897 and 1901) did Morice's name appear alongside Gauguin's as author. Furthermore, he spent much of his life after Gauguin's death publishing letters, articles, reviews and a monograph on the painter." Paul Gauguin, *Noa Noa: Gauguin's Tahiti*, ed. and intro. Nicholas Wadley (Oxford: Phaidon; Salem: Salem House: 1985), 100 (Hereafter cited as Wadley). When discussing the relationship between Gauguin and Morice, Wadley notes, "Gauguin first met Morice in 1890. Morice, younger by twelve years, was an ardent admirer of Gauguin's art, perhaps inspired by Mallarmé. He was one of forty-five guests at Gauguin's farewell banquet in 1891 and before he left, Gauguin thought well enough of Morice not only to lend him 500 francs, but also to entrust him with management of his outstanding financial affairs in Paris." See Wadley 101.

1895 edition of *L'Echo de Paris* printed an interview that contains Gauguin's ideas about this venture:

Avant de partir, reprit-il au bout de quelques secondes, je vais faire paraître avec mon ami Charles Morice, un livre où je raconte ma vie à Tahiti et mes impressions d'art. Morice commente en vers l'oeuvre que j'en ai rapportée. Cela vous expliquera pourquoi et comment j'y suis allé.

Le titre de ce livre?

Noa Noa, ce qui veut dire, en tahitien, *odorant*; ce sera: Ce qu'exhale Tahiti.⁴

Morice's 1920 monograph on Gauguin describes their cooperative effort thus:

Je donnerai ici, pour n'y plus jamais revenir, une indication précise et succincte sur la genèse de ce livre (*Noa Noa*).

C'est en étudiant les oeuvres exposées rue Laffitte en 1893 que me vint l'idée d'une composition littéraire sur les thèmes du peintre, dans laquelle celui-ci s'associerait lui-même avec un poète. Le plan s'imposait: une part de récits, qui serait de Gauguin, une part de poèmes, qui serait la mienne.

Gauguin accueillit avec enthousiasme ma proposition. Il rédigea très vite les notes d'après lesquelles j'écrivis les chapitres où "le Conteur parle". Mon travail personnel, plus délicat, fut plus lent. Je n'attendis pas de l'avoir achevé pour soumettre à Gauguin, qui l'approuva, ma version des chapitres de récits: cette version est la véritable et unique rédaction primitive.⁵

⁴Paul Gauguin, *Oviri: Écrits d'un Sauvage*, ed. Daniel Guérin (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1974), 140.

⁵Charles Morice, *Paul Gauguin* (Paris: H. Floury, Éditeur, 1920), 187 fn 1.

The exhibition to which Morice refers, upon its opening at Paul Durand-Ruel's gallery November 10, 1893,⁶ was the first public viewing of the artist's Tahitian work.⁷ Morice wrote the introductory essay for this catalogue, and we can assume that during this initial partnership the plans were made for *Noa Noa*. The poet's assertion that he conceived the idea for the book cannot be proven or disproven. Instead, it should be accepted that the two men initiated this project together.

Since its very inception, *Noa Noa* has had a complicated history. Three distinctly different manuscripts resulted from this artistic alliance. Their textual contents and styles -- even their physical appearances -- differ significantly. Gauguin wrote the entire initial manuscript, while the second edition contains Morice's additions and revisions, and the third consists almost entirely of the poet's text. These three manuscripts were published in reverse chronological order, with Gauguin's original

⁶Public reaction to this exhibition was mixed. Only eleven works were sold and among the critics "the verdict was at best unclear." Wadley 85. The artist himself gave differing accounts of the exhibition's "success." He wrote to Mette, "Le plus important est que mon exposition a eu un très grand succès artistique, a même éveillé la fureur et la jalousie. La presse m'a traité comme elle n'a encore jamais traité personne, c'est -- dire, raisonnablement et avec éloge. Pour le moment je passe auprès de bien des gens pour le plus grand peintre moderne." Gauguin, *Lettres*, 251. However, he also noted, that ". . . à cette exposition la foule puis la critique hurlèrent devant ce toiles qui ne s'aéraient pas suffisamment." See Paul Gauguin, *Oviri*, 168.

⁷It is interesting that Gauguin was working on this manuscript before the public showing of the works that it purports to explain. Several of his friends had seen these pieces prior to their public exhibition, and we might assume that the reaction of some of these persons to the Tahitian works was partially responsible for the artist feeling that there was a need for such a book.

work not appearing until 1954. Although this thesis primarily discusses the text Gauguin wrote alone and the images intended to accompany it, a brief outline of each edition's history and contents will be useful.

The first edition, quite rudimentary and fragmentary, contains numerous notes for further development. Working simultaneously on this text and the graphic work intended to accompany it, Gauguin had completed both *Noa Noa* components by April of 1894.⁸ Unfortunately, the ten woodblock prints that constitute what is now called the *Noa Noa* suite never appeared with the text, and no information has been found that states where in the text Gauguin intended these images to be placed.⁹ Gauguin gave his unillustrated manuscript to Morice. The poet kept it until 1908, when he informed the print dealer Edmund Sagot of the existence of this valuable manuscript. Sagot bought the manuscript, and his heirs published a facsimile in 1954.¹⁰

Upon receiving Gauguin's manuscript, Morice revised the artist's text, added his own narrative sections, and incorporated many poems into the prose. Then Gauguin transcribed all the written *Noa Noa* material created thus far in an edition now called the Louvre Manuscript. It is not clear whether or not the

⁸At this point the artist wrote a letter to Morice, informing him that the prints had been completed. Wadley 88.

⁹Gauguin exhibited these prints in 1894. Information concerning the creation and exhibition of the prints, as well as the reaction to them when exhibited, will be discussed later in this thesis.

¹⁰Wadley 89.

artist finished this copy before his July 3, 1895 departure for Tahiti. René Huyghe supposes that Gauguin worked on this manuscript while he was in Tahiti, while Jean Loize concludes that the artist finished this copy prior to his departure.¹¹ Yet, Gauguin's illustrations, which consist of watercolors, photographs, and certain segments of his previous prints, were definitely completed in Tahiti. The artist, apparently expecting further additions by Morice, left the manuscript's last fifty pages blank and years later filled them with graphics. Daniel Monfried, Gauguin's lawyer, received this version after the artist's death, and he donated it to the Louvre in 1925.

While Gauguin was in Tahiti, Morice continued writing the third manuscript, revising sections and adding more poetry. In 1897 *La Revue Blanche* published two excerpts of the final *Noa Noa* manuscript, in which Gauguin's text has been almost obliterated. Morice published this edition, containing the names of both Gauguin and Morice and later referred to as the La Plume edition, in 1901. By this time, Gauguin had already become disillusioned with the endeavor, feeling that the original intentions for *Noa Noa*, much as his original text, had been greatly altered. This is clear in a February 1899 letter the artist wrote to Madame Morice:

¹¹Paul Gauguin, *Ancien Culte Mahorie*, ed. René Huyghe (Paris: La Palme, 1951) (Hereafter referred to as Huyghe); and Jean Loize, *Noa Noa par Paul Gauguin* (Paris: Andre Balland, 1966).

Pour finir nous sommes d'accord en ce qui concerne Morice. Autre chose le livre *Noa Noa*. Je vous en prie croyez moi un peu d'expérience et d'instinct de sauvage civilisé que je suis. *Il ne faut* pas que le conteur disparaisse derrière le poète. Un livre est ce qu'il est . . . incomplet -- soit . . . cependant -- si par quelques récits on dit tout ce qu'on a à dire ou faire deviner c'est beaucoup. On attend des vers de Morice, je le sais, MAIS s'il y en a beaucoup dans ce livre toute la naïveté du conteur disparaît et la saveur le *Noa Noa* perd de son origine. *Puis* ne craignez vous pas que ceux qui attendent en jaloux non pas ceux qui attendent en amis, DISENT oui Morice a du talent, mais il manque de souffle créateur et sans Gauguin il *n'aurait* pas d'idées; et je suis sûr qu'on le dira s'il y a beaucoup. Tandis que peu remet les choses à leur place et annoncent la belle suite que vous connaissez toute prête dans ses papiers.

La publication de son volume immédiatement après bien présenté par le *Noa Noa* vaudrait beaucoup mieux.

J'ai donc beaucoup insisté la dessus parce que j'ai la foi absolue d'avoir raison. Ne croyez pas une second que se soit une question d'amour propre qui me guide, à ce point que si Morice veut publier les poèmes inspirés de *Noa Noa* sans les récits et aucune collaboration je lui en donne toute permission, heureux de faire ce sacrifice à mon ami.

Nous dirons ensemble au petit manuscrit

Dormez, c'est Nuit. C'est soir.¹²

¹²Gauguin, *Lettres*, 285-286.

CHAPTER THREE

GAUGUIN'S TEXT

Gauguin's initial *Noa Noa* manuscript is a short text not divided into chapters or sections.¹ This narrative, told primarily in the first person and the past tense, begins with the artist's June 8, 1891 arrival in Tahiti and concludes at his departure, two years later, for Europe. It recounts everyday occurrences, from the private (meeting his Tahitian wife, chopping wood for his sculptures) to the more public (a wedding, the funeral of a king).

Noa Noa ostensibly tells the story of a man becoming less civilized and more savage. The artist occasionally even notifies the reader of this process -- "Je devenais chaque jour un peu plus sauvage." (87)² Perhaps partially because of the author's alleged increasing disassociation with the civilized world, he uses language that is very accessible, even simple. He does not include complicated metaphors or sentence constructions.

¹ For Gauguin's original text, see the Appendix of this thesis. Nicholas Wadley has divided this manuscript into ten sections (not including the appendix). However, the original manuscript did not contain these divisions. In addition, Wadley's *Noa Noa* occasionally presents textual passages in an order that differs from that in Gauguin's original work. Wadley also notes that three short stories, written in Gauguin's handwriting, have been found as well and includes them with his copy of *Noa Noa*. They did not appear with the initial manuscript, but Wadley feels that they were intended to be part of it. This cannot be proven, however, and should be viewed with caution.

²The *Noa Noa* page numbers used here refer to the Appendix of this thesis.

Certain textual sections are quite fragmentary, containing what are apparently notes for further development, such as "-- tableau de Pape mœ" (95) and "Tableaux *Matamua*, Autrefois et de *Hina maruru . . .*" (96). None of the paintings mentioned in these phrases have been reproduced in the ten woodblock prints; therefore, these clauses alone do not relate to any *Noa Noa* images. Rather, they appear to mark the space in which Gauguin desires to place a description or a discussion of these images. These notes may have been addressed to either the artist himself or Charles Morice. Other instances contain hyphens and ellipses. These may have been designed to function much as the notes do -- to call attention to a portion needing further work, or these additions may be an integral textual component. If the latter is the case, this adds to the work's stream-of-consciousness nature. These insertions into what could be called the narrative proper result in a work that reads, probably intentionally, much like a travel log or a diary.

Sources for Gauguin's Text

Scholars have found several works that Gauguin may have used as sources for his first manuscript. The amount these works influenced the artist's text varies. In some cases, he was influenced by the format used or themes explored, while other instances show a more direct correlation between the contents of earlier writings and this manuscript.

René Huyghe demonstrated that Gauguin's *Noa Noa* has its seeds in a previous text by this artist himself. Gauguin created a notebook entitled *Ancien Culte Mahorie* during his first Tahitian stay, and he took this back to Europe. This notebook comprises Tahitian legends the artist's Tahitian wife Tehemana/Tehura³ recounted to him and he transcribed. Huyghe notes:

Et c'est entre les pages déjà fanées d'un livre qu'il a poursuivi, la plume à la main, le fantôme de Tahiti, *Noa Noa*, *la parfumée*, qu'il avait tant désirée et qui, déjà, depuis un demi-siècle n'existait plus.⁴

Accompanying the text are watercolors and drawings depicting Tahitian idols, landscape scenes, various animals, and Tahitian men and women. It contains chapters entitled: Création, Traduction, Eternité de la Matière, Atnas, Oromatuas, Tiis, Société des Aréois, Réflexions, Légende de Roua hatou, Naissance des Etoiles, Leur astronomie, Nomination d'un Roi, Légende de Téfatou, Prière Maorie, and Fragments de Discours. The two works share common themes and stories; indeed, Gauguin directly copied some *Noa Noa* passages from his notebook.⁵ Apparently, Morice obtained *Ancient Culte Mahorie* and kept it for some time. The two subsequent *Noa Noa* volumes contain increasing amounts of material taken from this notebook. Huyghe indicates that *Noa*

³In *Ancien Culte Mahorie*, Gauguin calls his wife Tehura, and this name is also used in *Noa Noa*'s two later versions. However, the initial *Noa Noa* manuscript uses the name Tehemana. Tahitians often have two names, and most scholars believe this to be the reason for the name change between the different works.

⁴Huyghe 31.

⁵Wadley 109.

Noa was written after *Ancien Culte Mahorie*, that in fact the previous book "est à son (*Noa Noa*'s) origine."⁶

Not only is *Ancien Culte Mahorie* the antecedent of the later *Noa Noa*, but, as Huyghe and many subsequent scholars have suggested, the notebook itself has a precursor. Although the author claimed that his Tahitian wife⁷ told him the legends this work recounts, he actually copied them from a previous literary endeavor. Huyghe writes:

Tehura n'a pas parlé, elle n'a jamais transmis à Gauguin les traditions de ses ancêtres, pour la raison essentielle qu'en 1891 ces traditions n'existaient plus Il n'y a plus de Tehura: il y a seulement J. A. Moerenhout dont les *Voyages aux Iles du Grand Océan* furent écrits à Paris entre deux séjours en Océanie. . . .⁸

Moerenhout's book, which is basically a catalog of ancient Tahitian mythology, was the inspiration for Gauguin's notebook. The artist received a copy of Moerenhout's manuscript from August Goupil in exchange for guns,⁹ and he later copied entire

⁶Huyghe 13. Huyghe first published a facsimile of *Ancien Culte Mahorie*, together with his own writings on both the sources for this notebook and its role as a precursor of *Noa Noa*, in 1951.

⁷The use of the word "wife" to describe the Tahitian woman with whom Gauguin lived should be clarified. Gauguin and Mette were never legally divorced, and he never married anyone else. However, he referred to the Tahitian woman he lived with as his wife, and she will here be called his Tahitian wife.

⁸Huyghe 25-26. In 1837 Jacques-Antoine Moerenhout was the United States consul in Oceania, and he later he served as the French consul to the same region. An edition of his book was published by Adrien Maisonneuve in 1942.

⁹J. Teilhet-Fisk, "The Influence of Polynesian Culture and Art on Paul Gauguin," (Doctoral Dissertation: University of California at Los Angeles, 1975), 41.

passages into his notebook. Thus, *Noa Noa* can be seen as a third edition of Moerenhout's work.

Scholars have noted the proximity in context of Gauguin's text to a Pierre Loti novel entitled *Rarahu* (Le Mariage de Loti). First published in 1879, this work recounts the author's marriage to a fourteen year old Tahitian girl.¹⁰ Although these two written works share a common theme, the stories each tells are not the same and neither is their language. Thus, Gauguin used Loti's novel as an example, not (as in the case of *Voyages aux Iles du Grand Océan*) a text from which he extracted entire sections.

In addition, as Richard Brettell has noted, Delacroix's diary was published between 1893 and 1895, while Gauguin was in France.¹¹ This album, created during the artist's 1832 trip to North Africa, contains text accompanied by watercolors. The *Noa Noa* edition influenced the most by this diary is the Louvre manuscript, in which Gauguin's addition of watercolors and drawings recalls the earlier artist's work. Delacroix's journal influenced all three *Noa Noa* manuscripts in a more general manner as well. Delacroix's textual and visual record of his journey to a far-away, exotic land no doubt inspired the later artist, if not through its intellectual or artistic merit, also by its commercial possibilities.

¹⁰Belinda Thomson, *Gauguin* (London: Thames and Hudson Limited, 1987), 164.

¹¹Richard Brettell, *et al*, *The Art of Paul Gauguin* (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1988), 298, fn 4.

Gauguin's Use of Textual Narrative

When L. S. Dietrich writes:

Gauguin wrote . . . not to make books, but to work out ideas, to assimilate information, to record feelings, and most importantly to construct the personal mythology that he made of his life and work,¹²

she is not exactly correct. Unlike "Avant et Après," the artist's notebook in which he repeats the phrase "this is not a book," *Noa Noa* was certainly designed as a book. The artist consistently referred to it with the word "livre" -- in letters, conversations, and magazine interviews. In fact, this is the only one of Gauguin's several writings that was unquestionably intended to be a book.¹³ However, he also used it, on a more personal level, "to work out ideas."

Not surprisingly Gauguin chose to explain his life and his art to the public in a narrative form. As Peter Brooks points out, "Narrative may first come to life as narration, as the inchoate intent to tell . . . where telling stories becomes the only viable

¹²L. S. Dietrich, review of *The Writings of a Savage*, edited by Daniel Guérin, In *Art Bulletin* 62/1 (1980): 174.

¹³Gauguin kept many diaries and wrote volumes of letters; however, *Noa Noa* was the only one of his written works for which he definitely had hopes of publication. For compilations of his other writings, see Paul Gauguin, *Correspondence de Paul Gauguin: Documents, Témoignages*, ed. Victor Merlhès (Paris: Fondation Singer-Polignac, 1984); Paul Gauguin, *The Intimate Journals of Paul Gauguin*, trans. Van Wyck Brooks (London: Heinemann, 1952); Paul Gauguin, *Lettres de Paul Gauguin à Emile Bernard 1888-1891* (Geneva: Pierre Cailler, 1954); Paul Gauguin, *Lettres*; Paul Gauguin, *Oviri*; and Paul Gauguin, *45 Lettres à Vincent, Theo et Jo van Gogh: Collection Rijksmuseum Vincent van Gogh, Amsterdam* (Lausanne: Bibliothèque des Arts, 1983).

form of explanation."¹⁴ Certainly this need for explication is one reason so many people record activities and occurrences in journals. Lives are not stories; rather, people create narratives that transform lives into stories. Hence, when something happens that someone does not immediately understand, he or she may form a narrative to explain it.¹⁵ Likewise, when relating something to another person, narratives are employed. Without a narrative, things like discussions, sensations, or thoughts could not be understood by persons whom they did not involve. Thus, as noted by Hayden White, a narrative occurs "between our experience of the world and our efforts to describe that experience in language." Narrative answers the question of "how to translate knowing into telling, . . . of fashioning human experience into a form assimilable to structures of meaning."¹⁶

Important in any narrative is the narration mode. The narrative is not the story; it is, instead, the *telling* of the story. Wendy Steiner connects the Latin words *narrare* (to tell), *gnarus* (knowing), and the Indo-European word *gna* (to know), using this correlation to relate narrative's role in transcending mere stories to gain (or give) knowledge. Hence, a narrative's significance is not only the told, but also the method of telling, and hence the

¹⁴Peter Brooks, *Reading for Plot* (New York: 1984), 54.

¹⁵Examples would be the numerous times someone says to him or herself, "How did that happen? Let me see . . ." and has continued on to reconstruct past occurrences into a narrative.

¹⁶Hayden White, "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality," in *On Narrative*, ed. W. J. T. Mitchell (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981), 1.

method of understanding -- of knowing.¹⁷ Thus, Gauguin's narrative informs the reader how to understand its story. In his simple narration method, time seems to be linear -- events follow one another in sequence, with no flashbacks or flashforwards. This manuscript, which uses only the first person, contains no complex networks of changing person and tense. In addition, the language is not ambiguous; rather, the reader feels he or she understands the story told and does not struggle to gain knowledge from a complex narration.

Narratologists often use the term "horizontal narrative" to represent the story readily available to the reader (or viewer). This story then functions as an integral part -- but merely one part -- of a higher narrative level, referred to as the "vertical narrative." While the horizontal narrative may be the story of a specific happening, the vertical narrative connects that event with more universal themes and values. To this end, symbols, metaphors, and allegories are employed. Sometimes the narrative method itself will form part of the story's vertical narrative.

Noa Noa's first level of meaning is what the reader initially receives from its text. However fictionalized this account of Gauguin's life may be, it is what it purports to be: the story of a man's two-year Tahitian journey. The text alone is horizontal; it is not connected with any universal value system or any larger

¹⁷Wendy Steiner, *Pictures of Romance* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), 7.

message -- in short, with any instance of metanarrative. However, when viewed in association with the woodblock prints intended for it -- and by extension with the artist's previous works to which these prints intentionally refer the viewer -- the text's role in *Noa Noa*'s vertical narrative becomes apparent.

mon travail (gravure) sur *Noa Noa*: je crois que cela contribuera beaucoup au succès du livre. Il faut donc que le livre soit fait et au plus tôt.¹ The artist exhibited these prints in his studio later that year. The December 4, 1894 *Le Soir* contained this review by Charles Morice:

L'Exposition, annoncée par le *Soir*, à laquelle Paul Gauguin convie dans son atelier (rue Verdingetorix 6), cette semaine durant, les amateurs d'art, serait pour un critique une occasion excellente de traiter utilement la question des procédés.

Œuvres sur bois, impressions en couleurs, lithographies. Gauguin se montre à nous, cette fois encore, sous des aspects nouveaux, sans perdre, bien entendu, l'unité totale et personnelle que donne à toute son œuvre une si prodigieuse intensité. Partout, en effet, vous retrouverez le sculpteur épris de couleur, partout, le songeur douloureux épris de joie.

Au point de vue technique -- et je devais m'y placer dans ce journal -- je dirais que la tentative actuelle de Gauguin embrasse de main toute une révolution dans l'art: on le gravure et dans celui de l'aquarelle; qu'il a, par l'effort logique de son tempérament d'indigéniste inventeur -- ou de "retrouvreur", s'il vous plaît mieux -- ramené à leurs principes seconds ces deux arts compromis par leurs

¹Quoted in Richard Kerkhof, Harold Jourdain, and Elizabeth Morgan, *Paul Gauguin: Catalogue Raisonné of his Prints* (Gene: 1984), 47.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE NOA NOA PRINTS

In May 1894, Gauguin wrote to Morice, "Je viens de terminer mon travail (gravure) sur Noa Noa: je crois que *celà* contribuera beaucoup au succès du livre. Il *faut donc* que le livre soit fait et au plus tôt."¹ The artist exhibited these prints in his studio later that year. The December 4, 1894 *Le Soir* contained this review by Charles Morice:

L'Exposition, annoncée par le Soir, à laquelle Paul Gauguin convie dans son atelier (rue Vercingétorix 6), cette semaine durant, les amateurs d'art, serait pour un critique une occasion excellente de traiter utilement la question des procédés.

Gravures sur bois, impressions en couleurs, lithographies, Gauguin se montre à nous, cette fois encore, sous des aspects nouveaux, sans perdre, bien entendu, l'unité initiale et personnelle que donne à toute son oeuvre une si prodigieuse intensité. Partout, en effet, vous retrouverez le sculpteur épris de couleur; partout, le songeur douloureux épris de joie.

Au point de vue technique -- si je devais m'y placer dans ce journal -- je dirais que la tentative actuelle de Gauguin entraînera demain toute une révolution dans l'art de la gravure et dans celui de l'aquarelle; qu'il a, par l'effort logique de son tempérament d'infatigable inventeur -- ou de 'retrouveur', s'il vous plaît mieux -- ramené à leurs principes féconds ces deux arts compromis par leurs

¹Quoted in Eberhard Komfeld, Harold Joachim, and Elizabeth Morgan, *Paul Gauguin: Catalogue Raisonné of his Prints* (Bern: 1988), 47.

'maîtres' officiels; qu'en ce point donc, ainsi qu'en tant d'autres, l'heure esthétique restera marquée de lui.²

Julien Leclercq also wrote about these works. His "Y'magier" article noted, "Gauguin. -- Filiger. -- Vu chez Gauguin de belles et neuves gravures sur bois et revu ses études tahitiennes, tout cela à la fois classique et barbare, voulu et fougueux."³

The *Noa Noa* Suite contains ten woodblock prints (Figures 1-10);⁴ three are vertical images, the other seven are horizontal.⁵

²Quoted in Kornfeld 47.

³Quoted in Kornfeld 49.

⁴During the Nineteenth Century Europe saw an increase in the production of woodblock prints. See J. Baas, "Auguste Lepere and the Artistic Revival of the Woodcut in France 1875-1895" (Doctoral Dissertation: University of Michigan, 1982); and Jacquelynn Baas and Richard Field, *The Artistic Revival of the Woodcut in France 1850-1900* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Museum of Art; and New Haven: Yale University Art Gallery, 1984). For general information on woodcuts, see Arthur M. Hind, *An Introduction to a History of Woodcut* (New York: Dover Publications, Incorporated, 1963).

⁵These prints do not seem to resemble any previous graphic work, either by Gauguin or by other artists. For comparative material, see Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum Vincent van Gogh, *The Prints of the Pont-Aven School: Gauguin and his Circle in Brittany*, text by Caroline Boyle-Turner (New York: Abbeville Press, 1986); Caroline Boyle-Turner, "La Bretagne vue par les Graveurs de l'Ecole de Pont-Aven," *Nouvelles de l'Estampe* 101-102 (1988): 15-23; Riva Castleman, *Prints from Blocks: Gauguin to Now* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1982); Colta Feller Ives, "French Prints in the Era of Impressionism and Symbolism," *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* 46 (Summer 1988): 3-57; William M. Ivins, Jr., *Prints and Books: Informal Papers* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1927); and Alpheus Hyatt Mayor, *Prints and People: A Social History of Printed Pictures* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1971). For works on Gauguin's graphic oeuvre see The Art Institute of Chicago, *Gauguin Prints* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 1959); F. Cachin, "Acquisitions. Un Bois de Gauguin: 'Soyez Mystérieuse'," *Revue de Louvre et des Musées de France* 29 (1979): 215-218; Richard Field, "Gauguins Traesnit" (Gauguin's Woodblock Prints), *Louisiana Revy* 23 (1982-1983): 28-34; Richard Field, "Gauguin's Woodcuts," *Expedition* 11 (1969): 27-29; Richard Field, *Paul Gauguin: Monotypes* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1973); Henry S. Francis, "A Woodcut by Gauguin," *Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* (1934): 96-98; Marcel Guérin, *L'Oeuvre Gravé de Gauguin* (San Francisco: Wofsy Fine Arts, 1980); Kornfeld; Jacob

Each measures 355 mm by 205 mm, and the book for which they were intended is 400 mm by 260 mm.⁶ The National Gallery of Art in Washington owns one *Noa Noa* print that contains an inscription on the verso. Written by the Hungarian painter József Rippl-Rónai, it recounts the artist's creation of this image:

Budapest, February 22, 1907. -- Unique copy -- woodcut by Paul Gauguin which I received as a present from him personally. He printed it before me in a most primitive way, putting his weight on his bed. He was much attracted by the portrait of *My Granny* painted by Rónai. I became acquainted with him at the opening of the Salon in the Champs de Mars. He was then in the company of Toulouse-Lautrec, and the poet Ruinard. I had been invited by him for tea in his atelier in the Rue Vercingétorix where I was then in the company of Noa-Noa, his wife, Vistiti, a monkey climbing up and down the rope hanging from the ceiling, Ruinard, and someone else playing the piano. We remained there from about nine o'clock till midnight. Meanwhile Gauguin had been printing his woodcut until we departed. Then he gave me another print, too, showing a milk-cow on yellow paper made during his Breton period. But on its verso there was a hardly recognizable female nude from his Tahitian period. -- Rónai.⁷

Richard Field showed that Gauguin worked on all ten *Noa Noa* prints simultaneously. When changing one block, he would alter

Lindberg-Hansen, "Discovering Paul Gauguin, the Woodcarver," *College Art Journal* 12 (1952-1953); D. A. Mayer, "Gauguin's 'L'Universe est Créé: A Creative Vision,'" *Porticus* (Journal of the Memorial Art Gallery, University of Rochester) 1 (1978): 40-45; Carl O. Schniewing, "Two Woodcuts by Paul Gauguin," *Bulletin of the Art Institute of Chicago* 34 (1940): 112; and Libuse Sykorova, *Gauguin's Woodcuts* (London: Westbook House, 1963).

⁶Richard Field, "Gauguin's Noa Noa Suite," *Burlington Magazine* 110 (1968): 500-511. Of course, the size of the pages Gauguin used for his first version do not necessarily have to correspond to the size of the paper he planned on using for the final, published version.

⁷Translated in Field, "Noa Noa Suite," 503.

the other nine as well. One did not receive any more labor than did the others; instead, Gauguin's changes to the blocks were always uniform. Thus, instead of "states", we should speak of the different "stages" in the images' execution.⁸ The prints created during some stages are more delicately detailed, while other stages indicate the artist's interest in obscuring details and creating less discernible images. This working method shows that Gauguin certainly considered these ten images a series. Therefore, we should also regard each one as a portion of the larger whole.

While carving and printing the blocks, the artist experimented with numerous techniques.⁹ He used knives, needles, and sandpaper, creating a mirage of gouged lines, each of varying thickness. What results are prints that almost vibrate, that seem to represent intangible matter. In addition, Gauguin often printed the same image multiple times on one surface, misaligning the images. In such prints, he sometimes he used two different hues of the same color, strengthening the effect of movement. The same figures appear in slightly different locations, as if they have moved, thus implying the passage of

⁸Field, "Noa Noa Suite," 503-507.

⁹Jeanne Teilhet-Fisk notes that, "Field does not explain his (Gauguin's) usage of the primitive; nor do other scholars, such as Gray, mention that this unusual technique of Gauguin's might have been inspired by the Marquesan technique of wood-carving. It is common knowledge that Gauguin made rubbings of Marquesan wood-work and it would seem likely that he noticed that their method of engraving the lines of the composition into the surface of the wood produced an unusual rubbing." See Teilhet-Fisk 101.

time. Gauguin's unorthodox carving and printing methods create images that make the viewer conscious of the artist and his creation of the print.

Although Gauguin began *Noa Noa* to help his viewers understand his Tahitian paintings, scholars often describe the ten *Noa Noa* woodblock prints as incomprehensible images.¹⁰ Indeed, Richard Brettell calls these works "denser, more difficult, and ultimately more mythic than anything he had produced in the South Seas."¹¹ Their space and time are ambiguous, causing the viewer to feel as if he or she cannot "read" them. They do not appear literally to illustrate the *Noa Noa* text; however, they also do not seem to tell their own story -- at least not a story that the reader can readily comprehend.

There have been some attempts to order the ten blocks; but none of these seems sufficiently plausible. The Art Institute of Chicago's set of *Noa Noa* prints contains graphite numbers on their versos. Assuming that these numbers refer to the prints' positioning, their order would be: *Te Atua, Auti te Pape, Noa Noa, Te Faruru, Nave Nave Fenua, Te Po, Maruru, L'Universe est Créé*, then *Mahna no Varua Ino*. However, nothing indicates the placement of the print *Manao Tupapau*. Furthermore, these

¹⁰A small number of scholars have written on the *Noa Noa* prints, although no one other than Richard Field has analyzed these images beyond the most superficial level.

¹¹Richard Brettell *et al* 318.

numbers continue on the backs of unrelated prints; thus, they probably existed merely as random inventory numbers.¹²

Richard Field proposes that the prints have an inherent order, regardless of any relationship to the text and that "Perhaps Gauguin thought only of using his woodcuts to separate the sections of his book." Presuming Gauguin intended the series to contain an "elemental life cycle," he groups the works as follows: birth and death (*Manao Tupapau*), maturation and sexual consciousness (*Nave Nave Fenua*), loving and procreation (*Te Faruru*), gathering food (*Noa Noa*), bathing (*Auti te Pape*), society and ritual (*Mahna no Varua Ino*), sleep and dreams (*Te Po*), and religion (*Maruru*, *Te Atua*, and *L'Universe est Créé*).¹³ He does not explain why this is so; for instance, why gathering food should precede bathing in a life cycle.

Eberhard Kornfeld, Harold Joachim, and Elizabeth Morgan position the prints thus: *Noa Noa*, *Nave Nave Fenua*, *Te Faruru*, *Auti te Pape*, *Te Atua*, *L'Universe est Créé*, *Mahna no Varua Ino*, *Manao Tupapau*, *Te Po*, and *Maruru*. They only connect text and image by saying the prints were "all destined to serve as title or illustration for the intended ten chapters of *Noa Noa*." Nevertheless, this analysis is not carried further.¹⁴

¹²Brettell *et al* 321.

¹³Field, "Noa Noa Suite," 509.

¹⁴Kornfeld. The belief that the initial manuscript contained ten chapters is, as previously mentioned, erroneous.

Some Marcel Guérin's catalog does not mention the graphics in association with the text of *Noa Noa* at all. It presents the works in this order: *Te Po*, *Noa Noa*, *Manao Tupapau*, *Te Faruru*, *Maruru*, *L'Universe est Créé*, *Nave Nave Fenua*, *Te Atua*, *Mahna no Varua Ino*, *Auti te Pape*.¹⁵

No attempt to order the prints relates the images to the text satisfactorily; in fact, there exists no work relating these images to the text at all. Although the prints seemingly do not directly illustrate the more narrative passages -- the "stories" -- we must not conclude that they have no specific relationship to the text whatsoever and thus (as Field has done) discuss the works as a unit meant to function outside of its context.¹⁶ In contrast, this thesis proposes that the prints' order should be based primarily on their relationship with the text. Through connecting each image with a specific textual passage, Chapter Five will explain the rationale for the below positioning of the images.

Though the *Noa Noa* images may seem to be without precedent in Gauguin's oeuvre, each of the ten relates, either directly or indirectly, to the works created during Tahitian trip.¹⁷

¹⁵Guérin.

¹⁶Although the prints may, and indeed do, function as artworks without the text, we must always keep in mind the fact that Gauguin created them as illustrations for his writings. Thus, the two must be viewed together.

¹⁷Gauguin's entire oeuvre contains innumerable instances of recurring motifs. The artist often reworked these images over the course of many years. See François Daulte, "L'Art de transposer le sujet chez Gauguin," *Connaissance des Arts* 84 (1959): 44-47.

Sometimes these relationships are stylistic, containing various amounts of visual influence, from a singular pictorial motif to the print forming almost a pastiche of previous works. More often, however, the relationships are less clear. Some associations are not even visual, with the prints relating to their precedents either thematically or verbally (through inscribed words). Indeed, similar connections exist among *Noa Noa* prints themselves. By examining the antecedents of each print in Gauguin's Tahitian oeuvre and investigating how the artist has altered these previous images, we will be better equipped to identify the prints' "characters", to relate the works thematically with other works, and thus to understand their function.

Te Atua

Te Atua (The Gods) contains three deity groups,¹⁸ one consisting of two figures, the others containing one figure each. On the left, seated and shown in profile, are one female and one male. They face each other, and the female raises her left hand near the male's shoulder in a conversational gesture. A seated female deity, shown frontally, occupies the center of the print.

¹⁸Gauguin often used religious figures in his art, whether they were Christian, Polynesian, or Far Eastern. For a complete study of such images see Ziva Amishai-Maisels, *Gauguin's Religious Themes* (New York and London: Garland, 1985). For discussions of religious influences on Gauguin, see Merette Bodelsen, "Gauguin and the Marquesan God," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 57 (1961): 167-180; and Thomas Buser, "Gauguin's Religion," *Art Journal* 21 (1967-1968): 375-380.

Echoing Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of various time periods,¹⁹ she sits with a mandorla-shaped object behind her head. The right side contains a female deity whose visual precursors are standing Polynesian idols.²⁰ Supporting an elaborate headdress, this divinity's head dominates the right side of the print. No perspectival devices show any spatial relationship between the three groups. These groups are, nevertheless, separated by vegetation and striated lines, varying in thickness, carved deeply into the block. One group's elements do not cross into the others' space. In addition, all the heads are enframed -- the left ones by a moon, the central god's by a mandorla shape, and the right figure by the large headdress flowing down past its shoulders. This "framing" device further isolates the figures and draws the viewer's eye to their heads. Furthermore, the ground upon which

¹⁹Gauguin had many opportunities to see such works of art, most notably at the Exposition Universelle. In fact, Richard Brettell has noted that "He brought at least two photographs of statues of Buddhas in the half-lotus pose with him to Tahiti as reference material." See Brettell *et al* 251.

²⁰An extensive amount of work has been done on sources -- "exotic" and otherwise -- for Gauguin's art. For various discussions of these sources, see Jean Alazard, "L'Exotisme dans la peinture française au XIXe Siècle," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 1 (1931): 240-255; Merette Bodelsen, "Gauguin, the Collector," *Burlington Magazine* 112 (1970): 590-615; B. Braun, "Paul Gauguin's Indian Identity: How Ancient Peruvian Pottery Inspired his Art," *Art History* 9 (1986): 36-54; Arthur C. Danto, "Gauguin's Tahitian Daze," *Art News* 87/6 (Summer 1988): 128-132; B. Dorival, "Further Observations on Sources of the Art of Gauguin," *Burlington Magazine* 93 (1951): 237; B. Dorival, "Sources of the Art of Gauguin from Java, Egypt and Ancient Greece," *Burlington Magazine* 93 (1951): 118-122; J. D. Flam, "The Spell of the Primitive. In Africa and Oceania Artists Found a New Vocabulary," *Connoisseur* 214 (1984): 124-131; New York, Museum of Modern Art, "Primitivism" in Twentieth Century Art: *Affinity of the Tribal and the Modern*, ed. William Rubin (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1984); Teilhet-Fisk; and G. Weelen, "Le Marbre and le Bois," *Vie des Arts* 118/29 (March 1985): 28-29, 94.

these figures apparently exist is ambiguous -- a dark spatial register interrupted only by Gauguin's signature, a squirrel-like animal and one thick line. It is unclear whether the separate groups represent objects placed next to each other or figures with no spatial relationship at all. Gauguin inscribed the title of the above and slightly to the left of the central figure.

This print, compared to the other *Noa Noa* images, directly relates to the largest number of the artist's previous works. Each figure has prototypes in Gauguin's early Tahitian works. The sculpture *Idol with a Pearl* (Figure 11)²¹ includes a Buddha-like female figure with Polynesian facial features that duplicates *Te Atua's* central divinity. In fact, the figures' only difference is their hand positioning, which has been reversed in the print.²² The back of the sculpture contains a low-relief carving of three gods, one standing and two seated. The two seated figures relate closely to *Te Atua's* two left figures, sharing similar facial features. The relief, however, depicts the female figure sitting behind her companion, who turns his back to her.

Hina in *Cylinder Decorated with the Figure of Hina* (Figure 12) echoes the figure on the right side of the print. The facial features, stance with legs together and feet turned out, and the

²¹For information on Gauguin's representations of Polynesian deities created during his first trip to Tahiti, see Ziva Amishai-Maisels, "Gauguin's Early Tahitian Idols," *Art Bulletin* 60 (1978): 331-341; and Teilhet-Fisk.

²²This of course means that the positioning of the hands on the woodblock would directly relate to that in the sculpture. Thus, the figure on the block would be the same as that in the sculpture.

loin-clothe clothing are all the same. The figures differ only in that the arms of the figure in the print are down, while those on the sculpture are bent upwards at the elbows. This extreme similarity provides sufficient evidence to identify the *Te Atua* figure as Hina, the ancient Polynesian goddess.

The cylindrical sculpture *Hina and Fatu* (Figure 13) depicts two reliefs, both relating to this print. Appearing on the front is Hina, the goddess of air and the moon, who speaks with her son Fatu. These two figures, as Richard Brettell notes, are basically the same as the two left figures in the print.²³ Not only do they contain the same facial features, but they have the same posture and execute the same gestures. The opposite side of the sculpture supports figures of Hina and Taaroa (Figure 14). The visual differences between this pair and that in the print indicates that the print's figures are indeed Hina and Fatu and not Hina and Taaroa.

Idol with a Shell (Figure 15), a relief, consists of a male figure in a Buddha pose, like the pose of *Te Atua*'s central figure. Jehanne Teilhet-Fisk has identified this deity as Taaroa.²⁴ Aside from the pose of the figures, the two figures are not related, because the figure in *Te Atua* is a woman. Two pairs of figures occupy the reverse of the sculpture, one depicts Hina and Fatu,

²³Brettell *et al* 254.

²⁴Teilhet-Fisk 54.

the other Hina and Taaroa (Figure 16).²⁵ Richard Brettell mistakenly states that "The same three elements -- Taaroa by himself, Hina with Fatu, and Hina with Taaroa -- make up the gods in Gauguin's woodcut *Te Atua*."²⁶ As stated above, Hina and Fatu are represented as the figures on the left side of the print. However, the center figure -- the one Brettell says is Taaroa -- is a female and therefore cannot be this male Polynesian god. Furthermore, the right side contains only one figure (the one we have identified as Hina) and not the pair of Hina and Taaroa.

While back in France, Gauguin created a burnt clay vase upon which he placed a figure of Hina (Figure 17) that precisely duplicates the Hina depicted in this print. Gauguin's execution method supplies another comparison. Merette Bodelsen indicates that this vase contains lead glazes in yellow, green and brown. The artist wanted the figures to protrude from the background by their thin color veil, much in the same way he defined the *Noa Noa* figures by the colors used during the printing process.²⁷

Relationships also exist between *Te Atua* and a number of Gauguin's paintings. Two paintings, *Merahi metua no Tehamana* (Tehamana has Many Parents) (Figure 18) and *Parau Hanohano* (Terrifying Talk) (Figure 19), similarly relate to *Te Atua*. In each,

²⁵Teilhet-Fisk 55-56. The painting *Vairaoumati Tei Oa* contains in the background a large idol, upon which is a relief that depicts figures similar to those on the back of *Idol with a Shell*.

²⁶Brettell *et al* 276.

²⁷Merette Bodelsen, *Gauguin's Ceramics: A Study in the Development of his Art* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1964), 143.

the left background contains a female deity analogous to the standing Hina in the print. Furthermore, these paintings include disembodied heads floating in space.²⁸ *Merahi metua no Tehamana* has two of these heads, one over each of Tehamana's shoulders. *Parau Hanohano* has only one such head, and it appears in the background, almost as an apparition. These heads closely resemble Fatu's head in *Te Atua*. Not only do they look like this head, but they are shown in the exact same position as it is -- in profile and bent slightly downward. All three cases illustrate Fatu bending his head toward an image of Hina, as if listening to her. There exists a famous Polynesian myth of Hina and Fatu conversing, which Gauguin certainly suggests in these images.²⁹

The relationship between two other paintings and this print is purely thematic. Both *Hina Maruru* (Figure 20) and *Hina Tefatou* (Figure 21) represent Hina, as does *Te Atua*. *Hina Maruru* includes an idol, but no features specifically relate it to the print. Even even less similar is *Hina Tefatou*, in which the god and goddess are portrayed as human beings and not in Gauguin's common previous depiction practice.

²⁸The motif of a decapitated head is common in visual and literary works of the Nineteenth Century. See Jean-Pierre Reverseau, "Pour une Etude du Theme de la Tete Coupee dans la Litterature et la Peinture dans la Seconde Partie du 19e Siècle," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 80 (1972): 173-184.

²⁹This myth's importance for our purposes will become apparent later in this thesis.

Te Faruru

Te Faruru (To Make Love) (Figure 2) is a vertical print, whose foreground is occupied by an embracing male and female. The male grasps the female and encircles her body with his arms and legs. The female's head has fallen back, and she holds her left arm up, in between her body and that of the male figure. The profile of a head is placed directly above these figures. Many lines flow out behind it, creating the appearance of wings or a tail. In the upper right corner of the print a triangular shape contains its title and Gauguin's signature. The woodblock has been left largely uncarved, causing the print to be mostly black and to have a lack of depth that is perhaps even more striking than that found in any other print. Spatial ambiguity leads the viewer to question the figures' location; it is not apparent whether they sit on the beach or a floor or float on air.

Richard Brettell noted that these two figures are also seen in the painting *Upaupa* (Fires of Joy) (Figure 22).³⁰ Less prominent in the painting, this pair is positioned close to the right edge. In fact, as the main focus of the painting is the couple dancing before the fire, the viewer must look carefully to notice the embracing couple. They also appear in *Mahna no Atua* (Day of the Gods) (Figure 23), in the background, to the right of the idol. Once again, this pair is not the focal point of the image.

³⁰Brettell *et al* 221.

The mysterious-looking head that floats above the main subject of *Te Faruru* echoes the heads seen in *Merahi Metua no Tehamana* (Figure 18) and *Parau Hanohano* (Figure 19). Shown in profile, they also slightly bend their chins downward. As noted, these heads are related to *Te Atua's* Fatu.

Although Gauguin's 1892 gouache *Te Faruru* (Figure 24) shares an identical title with this print, the two works have little else in common. In the earlier piece a woman stands, bending her elbows and positioning her hands together. Background elements are a hut, some trees, and a Tahitian "angel"'s profile. Despite their common name, these works seem to have no correlation.

When he returned to Europe, Gauguin made a watercolor entitled *Te Faruru* (Figure 25) that duplicates the print whose name it shares. The figures have been reversed in the watercolor, and their embrace is slightly less tight than that of the figures in the print. Furthermore, the watercolor, in which space is more clearly defined, does not contain the head related to Fatu.

Mahna no Varua Ino

In *Mahna no Varua Ino* (Day of the Evil Spirit) (Figure 3) many figures sit and stand around a fire that burns brightly in the background. Dividing the composition is a tree that grows up at a sharp angle. To its left a slightly sloping hill contains two pairs of figures -- one embracing, the other sitting with backs to the

viewer and heads bent together. On the other side of the tree are seated four figures who watch the fire and the dancing figures. Flames are the focal point of the image, because they form the only area not engulfed in darkness. The title of the print and the artist's signature appear at the bottom left corner.

Only one work exists in the artist's Tahitian oeuvre that obviously relates to *Mahna no Varua Ino*. Gauguin's 1891 painting *Upaupa* (Fires of Joy) (Figure 22) initially appears to be simply a painted reversal of this print. Yet a few differences must be noted. The right background of the painting depicts three figures, positioned near the embracing couple, that do not exist in *Mahna no Varua Ino*. In addition, the tree is not as prominent in the painting as it is in the print. And, as is the case when any *Noa Noa* print involves the reworking of an earlier piece, the print is less legible and ultimately more enigmatic than its predecessor.

The composition of *Upaupa* is roughly based upon that found in *The Vision after the Sermon (Jacob Wrestling with the Angel)* (Figure 26), as Richard Brettell writes.³¹ A tree trunk separates the composition of this Breton work into two portions: one contains young girls witnessing a vision, the other includes the vision itself. In other words, this element divides "reality" from an inner vision. As noted, *Mahna no Varua Ino* also contains a tree trunk that separates the composition. However, in this work it is

Pastoral (Figure 27). one woman sits and plays an instrument.

³¹Brettell *et al* 222.

less clear exactly what larger division this separation represents.

Noa Noa

In the foreground of *Noa Noa* (Figure 4), two young Tahitian women stand facing each other, apparently conversing. Beside the left figure is a dog, whose head is hidden behind the woman's leg. Thick lines of color on a black surface form the ground. The other woman stands farther away from the picture plane on a slight hill defined by numerous stylized hatchings. The upper portion includes a large tree-like structure, whose branches are divided into three sections, each containing a separate scene. The left and right sections depict seated women, while the top portion displays the title of the print, Gauguin's signature, and a floral design. To the right of this tree stands an animal that could be a rabbit or squirrel. Without ground below it, the animal seemingly floats. Framing the tree are blooming branches.

Noa Noa does not derive from one particular painted source. The only correspondence between it and its predecessors is ascertained by locating its figures in other works, by finding images that contain a similar "cast of characters." Gauguin painted at least four canvases that depict the same three figures found in this print -- two Tahitian women and a dog. In *Tahitian Pastoral* (Figure 27), one woman sits and plays an instrument, while the other stands facing the viewer, as if addressing him or

her. Closer in composition to the print are two paintings both entitled *I Raro te Oviri* (Sous les Pandanus) (Figure 28 and 29), in which two women stand, one balancing a stick on her shoulder. Also present are organic-looking striations on the ground that are like those in *Noa Noa*. The remaining painting featuring these three figures is *Arearea* (Amusement) (Figure 30).³² The women here both sit down, facing the viewer. The background relates the *Noa Noa* theme of to that of another print in this suite -- *Maruru*. In the distance the same Hina idol is worshipped by three Tahitian women.

Te Po

The scene in *Te Po* (The Night) (Figure 5) takes place at night, illuminated only by the flame positioned in the foreground. Behind it a woman lies on her side, apparently sleeping, with a blanket covering her head and body. Two hooded figures sit behind her and appear to be watching her. The artificial light source, which illuminates the reclining woman, throws shadows on the faces of the seated figures, making them seem threatening. The figure on the right appears as if it may even be engaging the viewer. The upper right contains a circle with Gauguin's signature surrounded by petal-like shapes. This element could represent the sun, but it does not emit light.

³²This painting is discussed by Sylvie Beguin in her article "Arearea," *Revue du Louvre et des Musées de France* 11 (1961): 215-222.

Images of Tahitian women lying down, whether fully outstretched or in a fetal position, occur many times in Gauguin's work. Perhaps the closest image to this print is the painting *Manao Tupapau* (Figure 31).³³ Both images show the woman lying on her side (although the print reverses the painted figure), with onlooker(s) behind her. The print, however, contains at least two such intruders and occurs outdoors, far from the painting's comfortable bedroom setting. These elements, combined with the shadowy lighting, create an image more profoundly disturbing than the painting. Obviously related, too, are the various woodcuts entitled *Manao Tupapau*, which will be discussed below.

The intruder at the right of the image also has precedents in Gauguin's work. It is seen in the painting *Parau na te Varua Ino* (Figure 32). In the painting, however, the woman it watches is awake, standing, and apparently cognizant of -- and frightened by -- its presence. Furthermore, seen in profile, this head would resemble closely that in *Manao Tupapau* (Figure 31) and *Nature Morte aux Fleurs et l'Idole* (Figure 33).

Auti te Pape

The print *Auti te Pape* (The Fresh Water is in Motion) (Figure 6) is divided compositionally into two triangular halves; the lower left portion contains a Tahitian woman sitting on a patch

³³Earlier related images are *The Loss of Virginity* (see Wayne Andersen, "Gauguin's Calvary of the Maiden," *Art Quarterly* 34 [1971]: 87-104), *The Little Dreamer*, and his copy of Manet's *Olympia* (see Ives).

of earth, and the upper right corner is filled with a body of water about to be entered by a woman. The seated figure, shown frontally, turns her head to the right, as if she is looking at something in the distance. Shown from the back, the standing figure's arms are raised and her head is turned slightly to the right, as if she too were looking at something. They do not interreact, and the viewer wonders whether either one is aware of the other's presence or even if they exist in the same space. Various forms of vegetation exist in both the land and water sections, with a tree in the upper left. The artist has carved both his signature and the title of the print onto a dark band at the bottom of the image.

The painting *Fatata te Miti* (Near the Sea) (Figure 34) consists of some elements found in *Auti te Pape*. It, too, is separated into land and earth sections, but these sections are horizontal, not triangular. The same motif of a woman jumping into water exists here in reversed position. The other female figure in the painting stands facing the water, as if she will join her companion there. Unlike the print, the two painted figures appear to be together and are joined by a figure not present in the print -- a man fishing.

The female entering the water recalls many Breton works in which Gauguin painted a female figure, arms raised, in the water. He initially entitled these works -- one painting (Figure 35), one pastel (Figure 36), and one fan (Figure 37) -- *Femme Nue dans la*

Vague, but the title *Ondine* was given to them, creating an association with the literary figure.³⁴ In these earlier images, a disturbing feeling results from the woman placing her right hand in her mouth. The figure in the print has not placed her hand thus. Nevertheless, a viewer familiar with Gauguin's earlier work is struck by the association between these two images. Indeed, the print's figure has no right hand, as if depicting the result of the earlier works' occurrences.

Gauguin painted many Tahitian women at the beach. Among these are *Tahitian Women Bathing* (Figure 38) and *Vahine no te Miti* (Woman at the Sea) (Figure 39), corresponding to *Auti te Pape* only through a common theme. However, the female figure in *Aha oe Feii?* (What! Are You Jealous?) (Figure 40) not only resembles this seated figure in pose, but also in the identical design and positioning of her hair ornaments.

³⁴Henning writes, "In northern folklore an ondine (or undine) was a female water spirit who could acquire a soul only by marrying a mortal and bearing his child. In a fairy tale written in 1811 by Baron de la Motte-Foqué, and ondine married the knight Hildebrand who later rejected her for a real woman. The ondine returned to the water but reappeared on the day of Hildebrand's wedding to give him a fatal kiss. The ondine was a femme fatale, embodying the treacherousness and dual nature of both women and water." He finds Gauguin's visual sources for this image in stained glass, Japanese prints, and contemporary Art Nouveau. See Edward B. Henning, "Looking at Art: The Woman in the Waves," *Art News* 83/3 (March 1984): 104-106; and Edward B. Henning, "Woman in the Waves by Paul Gauguin," *Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 71/8 (October 1984): 280-289.

Maruru

Maruru (To be Satisfied or To Give Thanks) (Figure 7) depicts a worship scene. Its right portion includes a large Tahitian idol seen in profile and seated on a carved throne whose relief includes a dolphin and a crescent-shaped object. A woman plays a musical instrument in front of this idol, while another woman walks away from it with her head turned back, and yet another stands behind it. This print, unlike many *Noa Noa* images, presents us with a somewhat coherent location. Many striations in the foreground represent grass, the middleground contains a hut, and the background includes a palm tree and a body of water. Directly behind the idol and framing its head is a tree whose branches resemble odd-shaped clouds.

As previously stated, Gauguin's Tahitian work involves many depictions of Polynesian gods. Such pieces are *Idol with a Pearl* (Figure 11), *Idol with a Shell* (Figure 15), *Cylinder Decorated with the Figure of Hina* (Figure 12), and *Hina and Fatu* (Figure 13). Because *Maruru's* idol is seen in profile with no apparent features that would determine its sex, its identity is difficult to ascertain. However a painting entitled *Hina Maruru* (Festival of Hina) (Figure 20) contains an idol identical to this one. Thus, the idol in *Maruru* also the goddess Hina. The crescent shape on the throne, then, refers to her moon goddess role. The painting also contains three women, each one a counter-part to a woman in the print.

type flowers, and a winged lizard, which hovered in the air.

The lizard, quite large **Nave Nave Fenua**

In the foreground of *Nave Nave Fenua* (Delightful Land) (Figure 7), standing on the sloping ground and raising her arms is a young Tahitian woman. To her right a plant blooms flowers that resemble peacock feathers. Directly to the right of the woman's head a creature resembling a lizard hovers under wing-like shapes. The upper section, filled with floral and vegetal motifs, is entirely decorative and does not locate the scene in any manner. Gauguin carved a frame onto the left and top of the block itself. This frame contains the title of the work, the artist's signature, and various geometric shapes and patterns.

Gauguin created many other works that also bear the name *Nave Nave Fenua* (or *Te Nave Nave Fenua*), all of which are, if not direct visual references, at least slight variations on the same theme.³⁵ On such painting (Figure 41), executed in 1892, shares many elements with the print: a standing nude woman, peacock-

³⁵Ziva Amishai-Maisels has written on many of the images discussed here, terming them all "Gauguin's Eves." She notes that the artist used the Eve theme "to express events in his personal life." See Ziva Amishai-Maisels, "Gauguin's 'Philosophical Eve'," *Burlington Magazine* 15 (1973): 373-382. Other writings on this subject are: L. S. Dietrich, "Gauguin: The Eve of my Choice," *Art Criticism* 4/2 (1988): 47-60; Henri Dorra, "The First Eves in Gauguin's Eden," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 41 (1953): 189-202; Henri Dorra, "Ia Orana Maria," *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* 10 (1951-1952): 255-260; Henri Dorra, "More on Gauguin's Eves," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* (February 1967): 109-112; Wojtech Jirat-Wasiutynski, "Paul Gauguin's Self-Portraits and the 'Oviri': The Image of the Artist, Eve, and the Fatal Women," *Art Quarterly* 2 (1979): 172-190; Barbara Landi, "The Meaning of Gauguin's 'Oviri' Ceramics," *Burlington Magazine* 109 (1967): 242-246; and Patrik Reuterswärd, "Gauguin och den Tahitiska Kvinna" (Gauguin and Tahitian Women), *Konsthistorisk Tidskrift* 53/2 (1984): 79-85.

type flowers, and a winged lizard, albeit reversed in the print. The lizard, quite large and menacing in the print, is less prominent in the painting. The background of the painting depicts a setting, while the print's is merely a flat, decorative expanse and not intended as a specific location. The artist also based many drawings and watercolor monotypes on this painting, such as a study (Figure 42), in brush, gouache, and india ink with pen and india ink on dark tan paper, which he inscribed with the pidgin French phrase, "Pas écouter li li menteur."

In addition, there exists a reworked study for this painting (Figure 43) that contains just the standing nude female, a small plant at her side, and a hand reaching into the pictorial space. Neither the peacock flowers nor the winged lizard is present. Curiously, on the verso of this study (Figure 44) Gauguin has drawn a seated woman with her legs crossed, her arms drawn to her face, and her head pulled downward. This image recalls Gauguin's numerous women depicted in fetal positions, most notably here that in the print *Manao Tupapau* (Figure 9).

A different *Nave Nave Fenua* drawing (Figure 45) also has on its verso a reference to yet another painting. This drawing, in charcoal on laid paper, contains the nude female, the winged lizard, and a plant (although the plant has no flowers). As with the *Nave Nave Fenua* painting, the lizard is less prominent than in the print. On the verso Gauguin drew a standing man who raises a hatchet above his head (Figure 46). This relates to Gauguin's

paintings entitled *Matamoe* (Death) (Figure 47) and *The Man with the Axe* (Figure 48), which represent young men with raised hatchets. As will be seen below, these paintings have special significance in understanding the text of *Noa Noa*, so their relationship to this *Noa Noa* image must not go unnoticed. Furthermore, there is a similar standing nude female in *Parau na te Varua Ino* (Figure 32). There is no lizard present in the painted work, and the frightening hooded spectator seems to have taken its place. The woman in *Parau na te Varua Ino*, with one hand in a pudica position and the other raised to touch her face, seems much less comfortable and more apprehensive than her counterpart in *Nave Nave Fenua*. Relating these two women to each other and the winged lizard to the hooded figure, an obvious relationship then exists between *Nave Nave Fenua* and such paintings as *Manao Tupapau* (Figure 31), *Parau Hanohano* (Figure 19) and *Contes Barbares* (Figure 49) -- images of enigmatic, seemingly even threatening, figures watching women.

Manao Tupapau

One figure almost entirely fills the composition of *Manao Tupapau* (She Thinks of the Spirit of the Evil Dead or The Evil Spirit Watches over Her) (Figure 9). It is a woman lying in a fetal position on an oval-shaped surface, with her back to the viewer, her legs pulled tightly to her chest, and her left hand placed over her right ear. In the upper right corner a figure, shown in profile,

faces the woman, but does not seem to look at her. With only its eye and mouth clearly visible, this figure is difficult to see. The female floats upon the ovoid shape in a dark void filled with objects resembling leaves and nebulous disembodied faces. The artist's signature is at the bottom left corner, while the title of the print is in the upper left corner.

Gauguin's painting *Manao Tupapau* (Figure 31), related to the print by name, contains some similar elements. In it, a woman lies down and a figure, viewed in profile, faces in her direction. However, this scene is an interior one, and the woman stretches out on a bed, facing the viewer. In addition, this spectator is at the left side of the work, is more prominent, and appears to look directly at the woman. In fact, the painting's two figures are more obviously related to each other, at least in spatial proximity. In addition, there exist at least three woodcuts and one lithograph associated with the painting *Manao Tupaupa* that should also be seen in this context.

Two *Manao Tupaupa* woodcuts (Figures 50 and 51) contain the female figure lying in a fetal position on an oval object. However, their backgrounds are much more defined than is that in the *Noa Noa* print. They also include a tree and other vegetation, two buildings, and three standing figures worshipping a Tahitian idol. The spectator figure seems to have been replaced by a dog lying next to the woman. The pervading mood of these two works is much less somber than that of the *Noa Noa* print.

Manao Tupapau's female figure has precedents in Gauguin's so-called Eve images, which began to occupy his works in Brittany. Although seated and not lying down, these figures -- seen in *Eve* (Figure 52) and in *Life and Death* (Figure 53)³⁶ -- approximate the image in the print. They draw their legs close to their chests, and their hands cover their ears. Furthermore, the other figure in the print, the spectator, also exists in the artist's previous works.³⁷ A hooded head seen in profile looms above a floral still life in *Nature Morte aux Fleurs et a l'Idole* (Figure 33). And what could be the figure's frontal view is painted in *Parau na te Varua Ino* (Words of the Devil) (Figure 32). In the latter painting, the figure also watches a young Tahitian woman, who here appears aware of his presence. This head also recalls the disembodied heads in works like *Merahi Metua no Tehamana* (Figure 18), which we have related to Fatu. However, in these cases, the heads resemble idols, while in *Manao Tupaupa* (Figure 31), *Parau na te Varua Ino* (Figure 32) and *Nature Morte aux Fleurs et a l'Idole* (Figure 33), the hood and human-like features of the figure associate it also with a person.

³⁶Wayne Andersen has determined that the source for such works is a Peruvian mummy Gauguin probably saw in Paris. See Wayne Andersen, "Gauguin and a Peruvian Mummy," *Burlington Magazine* (April 1967): 238-242.

³⁷See Henri Dorra, "Gauguin's Unsympathetic Observers," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 76 (1970): 367-372.

L'Univers est Créé

The print most difficult to understand visually is *L'Univers est Créé* (Figure 10), the only one containing a French title. Its figures are enigmatic, and its space is not defined. Leaves of different varieties appear in the upper portion; however, none seem to grow from any plants or trees. Hence, they merely float. Two faces or masks on the right echo Tahitian idols. The lower center contains an odd fish-like figure partially hiding a small, walking man. Further to the left a seated woman is seen from behind.

Because reading this image is so difficult, finding prototypes for it is nearly impossible. The idol-like faces obviously relate to the artist's numerous idols. Likewise, the seated female figure recalls Gauguin's many women in fetal positions. However, no painted figure so closely relates to the figures in the print that we can identify any of these elements.

Reading the Story Told through the Images

Unlike the text, these images are not overtly narrative. As we have seen, the *Noa Noa* prints often refer directly to Gauguin's earlier works.³⁸ For the viewer to gain the most information possible from these images, he or she must have had prior

³⁸M. Herban has studied Gauguin's creation of a narrative through the works of one of his artistic periods. See M. Herban, "Narrative Content in and Linkage Between the Works of Paul Gauguin, 1886-1887," *Southeast College Art Conference Review* 10 (1983): 162.

experience with Gauguin's art. Thus, the prints function, not as narratives themselves, but rather as part of the larger narrative that is the artist's entire visual oeuvre. Upon seeing each print, the viewer should recall all the works to which it refers. As Irene Winter notes, "not all figural works 'tell' a story. Sometimes they 'refer' to a story; and sometimes they embody an abstract concept without the necessary action and setting of a tale at all." Artists of all time periods and all geographic areas use single images as mnemonic devices. Such images function as "minimal clues"; upon seeing them, the informed viewer should connect them with the related narratives.³⁹ Linda Seidel writes that often "unseen events" implied by "seen" ones force viewer participation. Because these narratives are not told, but are rather hinted at, the viewer must create the appropriate narrative.⁴⁰

This is certainly the case with the *Noa Noa* images. While not one tells a specific story, each refers to different stories. In this respect, the images are similar to religious icons that, while not strictly narrative themselves, refer to narratives. Like icons,

³⁹Irene Winter and Marianna Shreve Simpson both deal with this issue. See Irene Winter, "After the Battle is Over: The *Stele of the Vultures* and the Beginning of Historical Narrative in the Art of the Ancient Near East," in *Studies in the History of Art XIV: Pictorial Narrative in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. Herbert Kessler and Marianna Shreve Simpson (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1985): 11-34; and Marianna Shreve Simpson, "Narrative Allusion and Metaphor in the Decoration of Medieval Islamic Objects," in *Studies in the History of Art*, 131-150.

⁴⁰Linda Seidel, "Installation as Inspiration: The Passion Cycle from La Daurade," *Gesta* 25, no. 1 (1986): 83.

Gauguin's images are static and exist in a timeless, spaceless world. The addition of words to the images furthers this comparison with icons, which also contain words to help the viewer relate them to the appropriate stories. Thus, the viewer's role in these prints is quite similar to his or her role in reading icons. He or she should ruminate upon them and their meaning in relationship to Gauguin's pictorial world. However, unlike icons, whose supporting narratives are accessible to many people, the prints are imbued with a meaning unintelligible to most -- if not all -- viewers. Of course the sources of these reference sources are not, as are those of icons, religious stories. Nor are they historical occurrences or mythological stories. Instead, these stories exist only in Gauguin's artworks. What results from this complicated net of ambiguous references is, much like Gauguin's printing process, an assertion of the artist's place in the works, and in the universe of his creation. We are constantly being reminded that he created these works, that their importance is -- quite aside from whatever meaning they may have -- their existence as his creations. Hence, rather than simply copying ten previous works onto blocks and using them to illustrate *Noa Noa*, Gauguin alters the images to remind the viewer again of his role as a creator. He therefore utilizes the images, not to explain his art or the text, but rather to call attention to his role as an artist, and thus to empower himself.

However, to appreciate Gauguin's use of the two media and to understand their relation . . . not for secrets, but for secrets. We must . . . hidden behind the

CHAPTER FIVE
TEXT AND IMAGE:
GAUGUIN'S INTERMEDIA APPROACH TO NARRATIVE

The *Noa Noa* images often frustrate viewers who cannot "read" them, and who thus find their plot unavailable. We do not understand where these events take place, who the characters are, or even what is occurring. This is because the images form a large section of the book's many "secrets." As Frank Kermode notes:

We are always asking questions of well-informed narratives . . . questions about the persons acting, questions about cause, questions about what the story says.¹

He writes that there are two processes in narrative that are linked together -- the first "tends toward clarity and propriety," while the second leads "toward secrecy, toward distortions which cover secrets."² *Noa Noa*'s text involves the first process; it relates the artist's everyday activities in a clear, easily accessible sequence. On the other hand, the "secrets" exist in the images, and in their relationship to the text. Therefore, when a viewer first sees them, his or her initial impulse is to disregard them, to view only the *Noa Noa* sections that appear to be in sequence.

¹Frank Kermode, "Secrets and Narrative Sequence," in *On Narrative*, edited by W. J. T. Mitchell (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1981).

²Kermode.

However, to appreciate Gauguin's use of the two media and to understand their relationship, we must read not for sequence, but for secrets. We must uncover what has been hidden behind the clarity of Gauguin's words.

The Position of the Images

At first viewing, the works do not seem to illustrate the text, but rather to complement it. Therefore, scholars often cannot find any clues indicating which images should be viewed with each textual section. Many scholars then conclude that the prints never had any set order,³ and some doubt that they were intended for the same volume as the text.⁴ However, evidence indicates the artist's view that these works were a complete unit inextricably connected to his written work. Gauguin's April 1894 letter to Morice informing the poet that he had just finished the *Noa Noa* prints and that they would "contribute greatly to the book's success,"⁵ demonstrates a functional relationship which the artist intended between the words and images.

In fact, textual evidence exists for each image's placement. Every *Noa Noa* print can be placed within a textual passage. Some of these cases are stronger than others. Nevertheless each print does illustrate -- in Gauguin's unique mode of illustration -- a portion of the text. The print's characters may be different than

³Brettell *et al.*

⁴Loize.

⁵Loize 76.

the story's, while the action occurring remains the same. A particular print may encompass many different textual occurrences, often omitting large portions of the story. Often the text the print depicts is not a true narrative, but rather it is a complement to the narrative. In other words, the artist may illustrate a single figure that represents an entire scene or even something -- such as a thought process -- that appears secondary to the true narrative.

When discussing these images' placement in relationship to the text, we will begin with those relationships that are the simplest and loosest and end with relationships that are stronger, more complicated, and ultimately more important in discerning *Noa Noa*'s hidden narrative. Thus, we will depart from the order in which the prints were previously presented. After discussing each print and its relationship with the text, the entire series will again be presented in the sequence these relationships create.

The prints *Mahna no Varua Ino*, *Te Po*, and *Nave Nave Fenua* each depict a scene that Gauguin describes textually. On pages 87-88 Gauguin describes a typical evening gathering. Such events probably form the visual basis for the print *Mahna no Varua Ino* (Day of the Evil Spirit) (Figure 3):

Le soir, j'allais à la maison où les indigènes d'alentour se réunissaient. Là après une prière consciencieusement dite par un vieillard, en refrain par tout le monde, les chants commençaient. Musique étrange sans instruments.

The print's figures dance before a fire to music represented through visual depictions of instruments. This textual passage, not the most important part of this particular narrative section, sets the scene for a particular party's occurrences. Likewise, the print gives the story a visual setting, positions it in a place and time and provides it with visual images of its characters.

In another section the artist describes a journey. Page 93 recounts the reaction he received upon telling people his plans to visit a certain place:

Par la vallée du Punaru, la grande fissure de l'île, on arrive au plateau de Tamanou. De là on peut voir le Diadème, l'Orofena et l'Arorai. Le centre de l'île. Bien des hommes m'en avaient parlé et je formai le projet de m'isoler quelques jours: -- Mais la nuit que feras-tu? tu seras tourmenté par les tupapau. Il faut que tu sois fou ou téméraire pour aller déranger les esprits de la montagne. -
- Tout cela était bien fait pour exciter ma curiosité.

He continues, detailing his journey to the island's center and describing the night he spent there:

Nuit noire: impossible de voir. -- Près de ma tête une poussière phosphorescente m'intriguait singulièrement et je souris en pensant à ces bons Maoris qui m'avaient raconté précédemment ces histoires de tupapau. Je sus plus tard que cette poussière lumineuse était un petit champignon qui pousse dans les endroits humides, sur les branches mortes comme celles qui m'avaient servi à faire du feu. (94)

The print *Te Po* (The Night) (Figure 5) illustrates what happened "la nuit" about which his acquaintances were so concerned.

Gauguin of course depicts the dark night and the strange

phosphorescent light in a mushroom shape. Initially the viewer cannot identify this strange object, which appears as if it may be a stylized representation of a fire. After reading the text, we realize it is the mushroom Gauguin describes that probably grew beside the area where he built his fire. The artist has also depicted the *tupapaus* that occupied his thoughts while he was lying down, the spirits believed to torment those who spent the night there. The print, then, depicts not the actual physical happenings in the text, but rather the fears about what could happen and his thoughts. If the reclining figure represents Gauguin, then the artist has here represented himself as a woman. As previously noted, *Te Po's* figure can be connected with Gauguin's numerous women lying down and being watched by a figure (or figures). The artist's works often identify him with women, and this identification's significance will become more clearer below.

Likewise, *Nave Nave Fenua* (Delightful Land) (Figure 8) illustrates, more than actions, thoughts recounted in the text. Gauguin describes meeting the young girl who will become his Tahitian wife. Her mother introduces her to the artist, who says that he feared his bride:

Cette jeune fille une enfant d'environ treize ans me charmait et m'épouvantait: Que se passait-il dans son âme? et dans ce contrat si hâtivement conçu et signé j'avais la pudeur hésitante de la signature, moi presque un vieillard.

Peut-être la mère avait ordonné, débattant chez elle le marché. Et pourtant chez la grande enfant, la fierté indépendante de toute cette race, la sérénité d'une chose

louable. La lèvre moqueuse quoique tendre indiquait bien que le danger était pour moi non pour elle. Je ne dirai pas sans peur je sortis de la case. (99)

The print depicts a young Tahitian girl addressing the viewer with a glance both playful and somewhat mysterious. Including the winged lizard, which often represents the evil serpent, Gauguin relates this figure to Eve. She is both beautiful and, if she listens to the serpent, dangerous. The artist feels that his future Tahitian wife, like Eve, can be both his companion and the source of danger for him.

The next two prints, *Maruru* and *Manao Tupapau*, relate to the text somewhat differently. By placing words on the woodblocks, Gauguin unites text and image. Often these words connect the print to a specific textual passage. In some cases, the artist uses the same Tahitian word both in the text and as the title of an image and thus creates an association between the two. Furthermore, in each of these examples, the textual reference occurs directly after Gauguin's discussion of a previous work. Thus, he connects the *Noa Noa* prints not only to specific textual sections, but through the text to his other artwork.

One manuscript portion contains Gauguin's note to describe the painting *Hina Maruru* (Figure 20). He inserts this note into a narrative section describing his journey around the island to find a Tahitian wife:

M'écartant du chemin qui borde la mer je m'enfonce dans un fourré qui va assez loin dans la montagne. Arrive dans une petite vallée. Là quelques habitants qui veulent

vivre encore comme autrefois. Tableaux *Matamua*,
Autrefois et de *Hina maruru* . . .

. . . Je continue ma route. (96)

He then discusses his arrival at a small village and his meeting his Tahitian wife. Without the painting reference, this textual passage would be simply the story of a man's life -- many men, not necessarily Gauguin. However, by inserting this reference, Gauguin makes the text into more. The text gives his images a context (albeit fictional); it makes the viewer feel that he or she is witnessing the first stages of the artist produce his works of art. We better understand the image, because we can combine it with a story. Likewise, we can more clearly envision the story read due to the this reference to a visual work. One *Noa Noa* print is associated with this passage. Obviously, the print *Maruru* (To Give Thanks) (Figure 7) contains the word *Maruru*, and, as we have noted, it also depicts the goddess Gauguin frequently represented. As discussed above, this print -- recalling its predecessors, yet different enough to remind the viewer that the artist and his work are still changing -- functions as a mnemonic device. When seeing the image, the viewer associates it with all the Tahitian works to which it refers. Like the textual reference to a painting, the print functions as a uniting factor between the stories of Gauguin's everyday life and his artistic creation.

The print *Manao Tupapau* (She Thinks of the Spirit of the Evil Dead) (Figure 9) is also connected with a textual reference to one of Gauguin's earlier works. The text recounts how the artist

returned home very late one night, fearful that his new bride left him while he was away:

Il était une heure du matin quand je rentrai. N'ayant à ce moment que très peu de luminaire à la maison ma provision devait être renouvelée. La lampe s'était éteinte et quand je rentrai la chambre était dans l'obscurité. J'eus comme peur et surtout défiance. Sûrement l'oiseau s'est envolé. J'allumai des allumettes et je vis sur le lit [*Manao Tupapau*].

Elle revint à elle la pauvre enfant et je m'évertuai à lui redonner confiance. (104)

The middle of this narrative contains a reference to the painting entitled *Manao Tupapau*. Not surprisingly, the *Noa Noa* print series contains a print with the same title, gouged into the block's upper left corner. However, the print does not directly mirror the painting. In fact, we have seen that the same figure is shown in two distinct instances, in two different poses, and from two diverse angles. Additionally, pictorial elements associate this work with other Tahitian paintings as well. As in the previous instances, Gauguin creates a rubric referring both textually and visually to his previous paintings that functions to tell these paintings' stories -- of their birth, as it were.

There are five other examples of Gauguin relating text to previous paintings and to a *Noa Noa* print; however, these are

much more subtle and complex. Page 82 textually describes a Tahitian painting, namely *The Man with an Axe* (Figure 48):⁶

L'homme presque nu levait de ses deux bras une pesante hache laissant en haut son empreinte bleue sur le ciel argenté, en bas son incision sur l'arbre mort qui tout à l'heure revivrait un instant de flammes -- chaleurs séculaires accumulées chaque jour. Sur le sol pourpre de longues feuilles serpentines d'un jaune de métal, tout un vocabulaire oriental -- lettres (il me semblait) d'une langue inconnue mystérieuse. Il me semblait voir ce mot originaire d'Océanie: Atua. Dieu -- Taäta ou Takata, celui-ci arrivant jusqu'à l'Inde se retrouve partout ou dans tout (Religion de Bouddha): *Aux yeux de Tathagata, toutes les plus parfaites magnificences des Rois et de leurs ministres ne sont que comme du crachat et de la poussière.*

The Man with the Axe contains the curving, organic lines Gauguin describes as "Sur le sol pourpre de longues feuilles serpentines

⁶A relationship between this painting and the first manuscript of *Noa Noa* can be seen elsewhere also. Gauguin later writes about an adventure in which he and a young Tahitian man go to cut wood for one of the artist's sculptures. While following the young man, Gauguin begins to see him as an androgynous figure to whom he is very attracted. He writes of this experience as the death of the civilized man in himself. The painting's title is the link that connects the text with this particular one of Gauguin's paintings. Reinhold Hohl has associated this painting with these sections of *Noa Noa*. He notes that the final two manuscripts of *Noa Noa* "deliberately misrepresented the autobiographical context of *The Man with an Axe* because it was felt that Gauguin's personal experiences as related in the original text were incompatible with the conventions of the time." See Reinhold Hohl, "Gauguin's Man with an Axe," *Source* 11/2 (Winter 1983): 30-32. Jeanne Teilhet-Fisk sees this passage as symbolic of Gauguin's death as a civilized man and birth as a savage, "Gauguin's severance from his civilized state, accomplished by cutting down the tree, and staining his hands with blood, is a theme also found in pre-literate religions, where the concept of new birth and the remission of tabus is achieved through the shedding of the blood. The mutilation of the tree may also refer to the penile 'mutilation.' Most pre-Christian cultures have supercision ceremonies which symbolize the transformation of a young boy into a man; this "wounding ritual" is still practiced to some degree in Tahiti." See Teilhet-Fisk.

d'un jaune de métal" Once again, the artist gives a verbal context for a painting. What appears in the text directly after this -- and, in fact, grows out of this description -- directly relates to the print *Te Atua* (The Gods) (Figure 1). Obviously the word *Atua* appears both in the text and on the woodblock print itself.

Furthermore, the print depicts three different deity groups: the two side groups are Hina and Fatu on the right and Hina on the left. However, the center deity echoes the iconography and traditional representational practices of Buddhist art. Thus, this image mirrors Gauguin's textual pondering of the word *Atua*. The print's appearance, with its three separate deity groups seeming to float and not to exist in any real time or space, itself reflects the artist's thought process. Thus uniting text and image, Gauguin has connected two images (or rather two groups of images, due to all the visual references) that the viewer might otherwise not think of in association with one other. Again, Gauguin gives the reader/viewer insight into his creative process.

Another *Noa Noa* section describes the circumstances surrounding his painting a certain woman's portrait, and it actually mentions two previous works. Gauguin writes that he had long wanted to paint a specific neighbor and so invited her to view his photographs of European paintings. The young woman especially liked Manet's *Olympia*, which Gauguin had copied (Figure 54). The artist not only draws attention to Manet's work

and the art of painting, but to his own painting as well. He describes his painting of her portrait thus:

Et je travaillai hâtivement: je me doutais que cette volonté n'était pas fixe. Portrait de femme: Vahine no te tiare. Je travaillai vite avec passion. Ce fut un portrait ressemblant à ce que mes yeux *voilés par mon coeur* ont aperçu. Je crois surtout qu'il fut ressemblant à l'intérieur. Ce feu robuste d'une force contenue. Elle avait une fleur à l'oreille qui écoutait son parfum. Et son front dans sa majesté, par des lignes surélevées rappelait cette phrase de Poe: Il n'y a pas de beauté parfaite sans une cert [aine singularité dans les proportions]. (87)

Directly following this description the artist recounts the occurrence depicted in the print *Te Faruru* (To Make Love) (Figure 2):

Quelque temps de travail. Seul. Je voyais bien des jeunes femmes à l'oeil tranquille, je devinais qu'elles voulaient être prises sans un mot -- prise brutale. En quelque sorte désir de viol. Les vieux me disaient en parlant d'une d'elles: Mau tera -- *Prends* celle-ci. Timide je n'osais me résigner à cet effort. (87)

Te Faruru depicts a man violently grasping a woman, while she raises her hand between her body and his. Indeed, the woman's head thrown back and her arms' position between the man and herself certainly relates to Gauguin's textual reference to sexual domination of women by men. As seen previously, Gauguin's print depicts the text that directly follows a description or discussion of his previous works.

As in *Te Po*, Gauguin places himself in the role of a woman in the print *Noa Noa* (Fragrant) (Figure 4). The artist writes of his

"ami naturel," who "venu près de moi chaque jour naturellement, sans intérêt." (89) He then describes an outing to collect wood for carving:

Nous allions tous deux nus avec le linge à la ceinture et la hache à la main, traversant maintes fois la rivière pour reprendre un bout de sentier que mon compagnon connaissait comme par l'odorat, si peu visible, si ombragé. - Le silence complet, seul le bruit de l'eau gémissant sur le rocher, monotone comme le silence. Et nous étions bien deux, deux amis, lui tout jeune homme et moi presque un vieillard, de corps et d'âme, de vices de civilisation: d'illusions perdues. Son corps souple d'animal avait de gracieuses formes, il marchait devant moi sans sexe . . .

De tout cette jeunesse, de cette parfaite harmonie avec la nature qui nous entourait il se dégageait une beauté, un parfum (noa noa) qui enchantaient mon âme d'artiste. De cette amitié si bien cimentée par attraction mutuelle du simple au composé, l'amour en moi prenait éclosion.

Et nous étions seulement tous deux.

J'eus comme un pressentiment de crime, le désir d'inconnu, le réveil du mal. Puis la lassitude du rôle de mâle qui doit toujours être fort, protecteur; de lourdes épaules à supporter. Etre une minute l'être faible qui aime et obéit.

Je m'approchai, sans peur des lois, le trouble aux tempes.

Le sentier était fini, il fallait traverser la rivière; mon compagnon se détournait en ce moment, me présentant la poitrine.

L'androgynie avait disparu: ce fut bien un jeune homme; ses yeux innocents présentaient l'aspect de la limpidité des eaux. Le calme soudain entra dans mon âme et cette fois je goûtai délicieusement la fraîcheur du ruisseau, m'y trempant avec délices. (90-91)

Many scholars have related this passage to two Tahitian paintings: the previously mentioned *Man with an Axe* (Figure 48) and *Matamoe* (Death) (Figure 47). In each painting, the viewer

watches a young Tahitian man cut wood. Gauguin's text gives these visual works a context. By reading it, we are informed of the conditions that Gauguin wishes us to believe surrounded the creation of these paintings. And, as seen before, Gauguin's textual sections that describe or discuss his previous works are connected with *Noa Noa* images. The textual section contains the words "*noa noa*", which unite it with the print of the same name. On their return home, Gauguin again notes that "L'arbre sentait le rose, noa noa." (93) The print's tree contains the words *Noa Noa*, just as the passage's tree contains a *noa noa* scent and the entire experience of cutting down the wood (of symbolically freeing himself of his cultural taboos) is for Gauguin *noa noa*. Furthermore, the print depicts two women who appear to have just turned to face each other -- just as the young man turned toward Gauguin and then lost his androgynous appearance. These figures, although women, appear much more androgynous than many of Gauguin's other female figures, such as in the print *Nave Nave Fenua* (Figure 8). They are slimmer and less curvaceous than his other female figures. In addition, the artist writes that he would like to not be a man, to be "l'être faible qui aime et obéit," (91) thereby uniting himself with women through the text as well as the image.

The print *Auti te Pape* (The Fresh Water is in Motion) (Figure 6) also relates to a textual passage mentioning one of the artist's previous works: The text reads:

Arrivé à un détour aperçu: -- tableau de Pape moe.

. . . Je n'avais fait aucun bruit. Lorsqu'elle eut fini de boire elle prit de l'eau dans ses mains et se la fit couler entre les seins; puis comme une antilope inquiète, et [qui] d'instinct devine l'étranger, elle scruta le fourré où j'étais caché. Vivement elle plongea en criant ce mot: -- Taehae . . . (féroce).

Précipitamment je regardai le fond de l'eau: disparue. -- Une énorme anguille seule serpentait entre les petits cailloux du fond . . . (95)

The painting *Pape Moe* (Figure 55) depicts the event of the woman drinking water. While no *Noa Noa* print illustrates that same instant, one does represent the occurrence that directly follows the woman drinking the water. As noted previously, the figures in *Auti te Pape* do not seem to be together; in fact, they might not even exist in the same space. This is because the work depicts two separate moments: the one when the woman stares out into the vegetation in which the artist hides, and her escape from his gaze into the sea. That the two figures appear somewhat different can be explained by the fact that, as she was diving, the woman became a "huge eel." Gauguin here depicts her transformation.

The one remaining print, *L'Univers est Créé* (Figure 10) is similarly associated with -- the last occurrence in the narrative proper (that is, not the appendix) before the artist's departure from Tahiti. Gauguin describes a fishing expedition which taught him much about Tahitian mythology and superstition. While on the boat, his companions told him the story of Rouahatou, "espèce de Neptune" (108), who caused a great flood to destroy all earthly

inhabitants, except those on the "*Toa Marama*," which "je (Gauguin) nommerai Arche." (108) Gauguin does not separate his retelling of this myth from his description of the fishing trip. In fact, the myth forms a major part of Gauguin's story. The artist goes directly from writing about this Neptune-like god to discussing his catching a fish:

Mon tour arriva; je fus désigné. Quelques instants et nous pêchions un grand thon: quelques coups de bâton sur la tête et l'animal, frémissant de l'agonie secouait son corps transformé en miroir, paillettes aux mille feux.

Une seconde fois nous fûmes heureux: décidément le Français portait chance! -- Tous de s'écrier que j'étais un homme de bien et moi tout glorieux je ne disais pas non. Jusqu'au soir nous fîmes la pêche.

Quand la provision du petit poisson-amorce fut épuisée le soleil incendiait de rouge l'horizon. Nous préparâmes le retour. Dix magnifiques thons surchargeaient le pirogue.

Pendant qu'on mettait tout en ordre, je demandai à un jeune garçon pourquoi tous ces rires et paroles échangées à l'oreille au moment où mes deux thons s'amenèrent dans la pirogue. Il refusa de m'expliquer, mais j'insistai connaissant le peu de résistance du Maorie, sa faiblesse quand énergiquement on le presse. Il me raconta alors que le poisson pris par l'hameçon à la mâchoire du dessous signifie infidélité de votre vahine pendant votre absence à la pêche. Je souris, incrédule. Et nous revînmes. (109-110)

Upon his return home, Gauguin found his Tahitian wife chopping wood and mentioned the fish. She immediately began to pray and asked the artist to "beaucoup me frapper." In *L'Univers est Créé*, the artist has combined many narrative sections. On the right he depicts a fish that could either represent Gauguin's catch or the

entire fishing expedition, while the woman on the left is probably Gauguin's *vahine* chopping wood -- the moment when he saw her. The print's title and the odd images apparently emerging from nothingness refer to the Rouahatou recreation myth. In addition, this passage, like many of the others connected with images, directly follows the mention of a Tahitian painting. The line that precedes this passage is "Nous aimons mieux croire à l'ange de l'Annonciation." (107) The text, like Gauguin's painting *Ia Orana Maria*, relates Tahitian and Western beliefs of divine birth.

By uniting each print with the textual section to which it most closely corresponds, the images appear in this sequence: *Te Atua*, *Te Faruru*, *Mahna no Varua Ino*, *Noa Noa*, *Te Po*, *Auti te Pape*, *Maruru*, *Nave Nave Fenua*, *Tupapau*, and *L'Univers est Créé*. In at least three instances, visual clues support this sequencing of the images. A prominent element in one print is repeated -- smaller, more faintly, and less prominently -- in the following print. Between the first and second prints, *Te Atua* and *Te Faruru*, this element is the face we have identified as Fatu. In *Te Atua* Fatu is the male figure presented on the left side, while in *Te Faruru* this profile appears in the air above the embracing couple. Similarly, *Te Faruru*'s couple appears on the left of *Mahna no Varua Ino*. And *Tupapau* and the print that follows it, *L'Univers est Créé*, both contain a crouching, nude female -- in *Tupapau* she lies on her side, while in *L'Univers est Créé* she is seated.

ekphrastic, leading Gauguin's Metanarrative

that It is important that almost all the textual passages related to specific *Noa Noa* images refer to and/or describe Gauguin's Tahitian paintings. Yet, these images do not duplicate the paintings. Rather, as noted earlier, they revise his earlier works. They refer to their prototypes, yet they are altered enough to remind the viewer that they, too, are new creations.

dist. Gauguin could very easily have transferred the paintings referred to in the text onto woodblock prints and then used those to illustrate the text directly. This would have greatly aided his viewer in understanding these paintings -- as he said was the book's purpose. This would have almost created a map to guide the public through his Tahitian art. However, Gauguin obviously wanted to do more than merely help people understand his paintings. Instead, he created a dialogue between text and image. The work utilizes both visual and verbal media to create a metadiscourse that deals not only with Gauguin's life, but -- perhaps more importantly -- with the creation of his art.⁷

⁷Works such as *Noa Noa* help to connect Gauguin with the goals of the Symbolist movement. L. S. Dietrich notes that the "real achievement" of a Symbolist work is "the uniting of form and content." She writes, "The image and formal elements . . . evoke the experience that occurred in the imagination of the artist. By a sensitive analysis of the work, a viewer can see the connection and relatedness of objects and concepts, the real and the Ideal. By starting with the real and by following the artist's evictions, the viewer may glimpse the Ideal. The method the viewer follows is an analogical one; his path may be indirect, winding, even tortuous. He must cross over from object or image to sensation or thought or emotion through the art work that is the bridge between the two realms Symbolist

When Gauguin describes a painting, his tone is almost ekphrastic, leading the viewer to believe he or she understands that being described; in fact, it seems like a textual description of a work. However, the artist then subverts this ekphrasis by creating visual images that, though seemingly illustrate and comment upon the text, actually confound it. Thus, what results is a multi-layered construction of artistic meaning; in other words, images comment upon words that comment upon images. This dialogue created between the two artistic devices repeatedly reminds the viewer/reader of the creation process and emphasizes Gauguin's self-assigned role of creative genius.

The Story within the Story:

Gauguin's Myth of Creation

Noa Noa's ostensible narrative is the story of Gauguin's day-to-day existence, of his purported evolution into a savage. However, the metanarrative -- the "hidden" narrative that results

forms must refer back to nature, they must maintain the bridge between the artist's imagination and nature, and they must involve the viewer in the process of linking the artist's imagination and nature. Symbolist art, then, combines polarities, balances opposites, is double in nature. Symbolist art attempts a synthesis of form and content, nature and imagination, reality and the Ideal. See L. S. Dietrich, "The Redefinition of Symbolism in the Visual Arts," *Print Collectors Newsletter* 6 (1975-1976): 34-38. For other discussions on the nature of Symbolist art, see C. Donnell, "The Problem of Representation and Expression in Post-Impressionist Art," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 15/3 (Summer 1975): 226-238; C. Donnell, "Representation versus Expressionism in the Art of Gauguin," *Art International* 19 (1975): 56-60; R. Goldwater, *Symbolism* (London: A. Lane, 1979); R. Heller, "Concerning Symbolism and the Structure of Surface," *Art Journal* 45 (1985): 146-153; and Wojtech Jirat-Wasiutynski, "Gauguin in the Context of Symbolism" (Doctoral Dissertation: Princeton University, 1975).

from the artist combining text and image -- tells a different story. This is the tale of artistic creation, and Gauguin plays the lead role of The Creator. To empower himself and his role as an artist, Gauguin combines this story with broader, more universal creation myths.

Frank Kermode, writing on the retelling of stories, contends that each retelling results in a new story.⁸ What an artist chooses to omit from his or her rendition is just as important as what he or she includes. The changes made to the initial narrative give the reader insight into a different story: the creation of the new narrative. Therefore, when Gauguin recopied Moerenhout's *Ancien Culte Mahorie* and used it as a basis for *Noa Noa*, he created a new narrative that, although based on ancient Tahitian mythology, actually tells the reader more about the artist himself than about Polynesian religion. As Jeanne Teilhet-Fisk notes, "Gauguin carefully selected and edited only those myths which would have the most universal ramifications."⁹ The mythological figure to which Gauguin repeatedly returned in his writings and visual works was Hina, the female goddess of the moon, of life, and of creation. *Ancien Culte Mahorie* recounts a Tahitian myth in which the mother and son deities share an important conversation. Fatu, tired of human's actions, wants to destroy them all. Hina then creates cyclical life, in order to let humans

⁸Kermode.

⁹Teilhet-Fisk 42.

live. Ziva Amishai-Maisels has found Gauguin's painted images of Hina to represent Life, while those of her son Fatu symbolize death. Furthermore, she associates Hina with Gauguin's figures of Eve and "native girls or a woman picking fruit or flowers," and Fatu with his images of Tupapaus.¹⁰

Many *Noa Noa* images relate to Hina and to creation. We have already noted Hina's presence in two prints: *Maruru* and *Te Atua*. *Maruru* contains women worshipping an idol of Hina, and this figure also appears on both sides of *Te Atua*. In addition, Hina's position as the creator of cyclical life connects her with other *Noa Noa* images. Many scholars have associated Gauguin's fetal figures, such as that which appears in the print *Manao Tupapau*, with a life-death cycle. These figures are also related to the reclining females, such as the one in *Te Po*. These two images are thus physical manifestations of Hina's gift to humans. Furthermore, the *Noa Noa* suite contains two more images that are associated with Hina; *Noa Noa*'s women gathering fruit and *Nave Nave Fenua*'s Eve-like figure are, as Amishai-Maisels notes, closely related to the Tahitian goddess Gauguin used to represent Life. It should not be surprising, then, to note that, in addition to *Te Atua*, many prints can be related to Fatu as well as to Hina. *Nave Nave Fenua*'s serpent-like lizard functions as an image of Death in opposition to the print's female symbol of Life, and three prints (*Te Faruru*, *Manao Tupapau*, and *Te Po*) also contain the floating

¹⁰Amishai-Maisels, "Gauguin's Philosophical Eves," 378-381.

head image we have associated with Fatu or Tupapaus -- both images of Death in opposition to those of Life. It is important that the two images in which Gauguin has identified himself with a particular figure, *Te Po* and *Noa Noa*, he has not only represented a woman, but a woman connected with Hina, and he has thus related himself to this Tahitian goddess and her role of Life-giver and creator. Furthermore, the one print cycle begins with an image of creation and ends with one of recreation. While *Te Atua's* textual section refers to the origin of religion, the print itself represents other origins. Hina and Fatu symbolize the origin of cyclical life, while Hina alone symbolizes life and creation, and the Buddha figure touches the ground in a typical Buddhist gesture of creation. *L'Universe est Créé*, the final print in the series, refers to creation and recreation. The print's title, the only French title in the suite, obviously relates to creation. In addition, the text tells us that we see in this image the Rouahatou story, the Tahitian myth that approximates the Judeo-Christian Flood story, in which a divinity destroys the world with a flood in order to recreate a better place.¹¹

The execution of the prints themselves emphasize the process of creation. Richard Field writes that from the artist's carving and printing methods, "There arises a double effect which was dear to the heart of the Symbolist: the forms are felt as

¹¹It cannot be a coincidence that Gauguin's title, *Noa Noa*, in addition to being the Tahitian phrase for "fragrant," is also the name of the main character in this Judeo-Christian story of recreation.

either tangible, glowing volumes or as non-crystallized shapes in the process of creating themselves."¹² The images appear to rise up out of a deep and penetrating darkness, as if they were being created from nothingness. With their strange figures and dark background, these images embody the ideas behind every creation myth -- that out of nothing elements are born. The viewer is constantly aware that these images do not exist in reality, but rather that they are the creations of an artist. This emphasizes the act of creation, and thus again declares Gauguin's position as creator.

It is not only through the prints and their relationship to *Noa Noa*'s text that Gauguin explores creation stories and related ideas. The text itself contains numerous references to both artists/art/artistic creation and to other types of creation. He mentions by name three artists specifically and their works of art: "J'ai cru entendre [la] Sonate pathétique de Beethoven" (78); "Elle regardait spécialement avec intérêt la photographie de l'Olympia de Manet" (85); and "Et son front dans sa majesté, par des lignes surélevées rappelait cette phrase de Poe: Il n'y a pas de beauté parfaite sans une cert [aine singularité dans les proportions]" (87). He also connects art with Tahitian life, writing: "Comme le directeur des travaux publics me demandait un conseil pour arranger artistement la salle, je lui fis signe de regarder la reine qui avec ce bel instinct de la race Maorie pare gracieusement et

¹²Field 504.

gracieusement et fait un objet d'art de tout ce qu'elle touche" (77). In addition, he often identifies himself as an artist and stresses the importance (many times through sarcasm) of this role: "Un jour que lui confiant mes outils je lui demandai d'essayer une sculpture, il me regarda bien étonné et me dit simplement avec sincérité que je n'étais pas comme les autres hommes et, le premier peut-être dans la société il me dit que j'étais utile aux autres. Enfant . . . il faut l'être pour penser qu'un artiste est quelque chose d'utile" (85); "Belle foeur dorée dont le noa noa tahitien embaumait, et que j'adorais comme artiste et comme homme" (113); "Pauvre mais riche de mon art" (115); "j'étais pauvre, Artiste seulement" (116); "je n'étais *rien* : un homme libre, un artiste" (116); and "heureusement que les officiers un peu au courant de ce qui se passe en France avaient entendu parler de moi comme Artiste" (120). Perhaps the most important line in helping the reader understand the book is the first line in the Appendix: "Après l'oeuvre d'art. La vérité, la sale vérité" (114). Gauguin reminds the viewer that the book is a work of art. It is not the truth, rather it is his creation.

Just as Gauguin's *Noa Noa* images contain numerous creation references, his text is filled with mentionings of various creation stories. The first such notation can be associated with the print *L'Univers est Créé*: "Quelques pointes de montagne où, bien après le déluge, une famille a grimpé là-haut, a fait souche; les coraux ont grimpé aussi, entouré la nouvelle île" (76). It recalls the both

the Tahitian and Judeo-Christian recreation stories, in which a new world is formed out of practically nothing. He hints at this story again, connecting it with the present: "Tandis que toutes ces terres croulent dans le déluge, il reste encore de toute cette féodalité disparue pour toujours le cimier protecteur, celui-là plus près des cieux regardant les eaux profondes, et majestueusement, l'ironie à la fissure" (83). Phrases such as "hache laissant . . . sur l'arbre mort qui tout à l'heure revivrait un instant de flammes" (82); and "ce mot originaire d'Océanie" (82), although seemingly insignificant, indicate the importance the artist placed on creation and recreation. This is also the case when, telling the story of Roua, the artist repeats the phrase "grande est son origine" (102-103). He also connects an everyday occurrence -- the birth of a child -- with a more universal creation story: "Cinq mois plus tard la jeune mariée mit au monde un bébé bien conformé . . . Nous aimons mieux croire à l'ange de l'Annonciation" (106-107), and he mentions a divine creation, "Que mes mains soient à jamais maudites si elles flagellaient un chef-d'oeuvre de la création" (112).

By relating his own creations with more universal creation myths, Gauguin has empowered his position as an artist. *Noa Noa's* many narratives have paradigmatic relations as well as syntagmatic relations. Jonathan Culler explains this difference:

Syntagmatic relations bear on the possibility of combination; two items may be in a relation of reciprocal or non-reciprocal implication, compatibility or incompatibility.

Paradigmatic relations . . . determine the possibility of substitution . . . (so that) the meaning of an item depends on the differences between it and other items which may have filled the same slot in a given sequence¹³

Noa Noa involves many stories that are paradigms of creation; by combining the narrative of his artistic creation with those of well-known mythologies (the stories of Hina and her association with Life, and Rouahatou) and with a universal image of Creation (in *L'Univers est Créé*), the artist conforms his particular story with ideal paradigms. The reader/viewer is thus called upon to make the association between these levels and to gain meaning from them by substituting one for another.¹⁴

It is not at all hard to believe that Gauguin would associate his role with that of creator. In Self-Portraits such as *Self-Portrait with Halo and Snake* (Figure 55), the artist presented himself as a creator. He made this association in writing as well:

¹³Jonathan Culler, *Structuralist Poetics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), 13.

¹⁴Many narratives, especially public ones used for religious or political reasons, employ this type of paradigmatic relationship in order to make the particular conform with the whole. When writing about the Temple of Athena Nike on the Acropolis, Andrew F. Stewart notes that, "in this assemblage myths, historical scenes, and allegories function as paradigms of victory." In other words, the Greek wars were associated with famous mythological battles -- all of them seen as victories for the good -- in order to proclaim their victory as righteous. See Andrew F. Stewart, "History, Myth, and Allegory in the Program of the Temple of Athena Nike, Athens," *Studies in the History of Art XIV Pictorial Narrative in Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, edited by Herbert L. Kessler and Marianna Shreve Simpson (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1985): 53-74. Linda Seidel also notes the importance of paradigmatic relations in her study of the Cloister Capital at La Daurade; however, in this instance the particular is the monk circling the capital. His identification with Christ called for a different placement of these capitals than that normally used. Thus, the particular is the viewer, and he is meant to correspond to the ideal -- Christ. See Seidel

. . . On dit que Dieu prit dans sa main un peu d'argile et fit tout ce que vous savez. L'artiste à son tour (s'il veut réellement faire oeuvre créatrice divine) ne doit pas copier la nature mais prendre les éléments de la nature et créer un nouvel élément.¹⁵

Noa Noa is the story of his creating this new element. Told through a complex interrelationship of text and image, and associated with other creation stories, this is Gauguin's creation myth.

¹⁵Gauguin, *Oviri*, 92.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

When Gauguin told his wife that *Noa Noa* would help the viewers of his Tahitian paintings better understand his work, perhaps he was more correct than he knew. He may have merely intended to create a story that would explain to the readers the physical conditions in which his paintings were created and that would indicate the portions of native Tahitian religion and mythology that had influenced his work. *Noa Noa*'s text certainly does give the reader all this information in a clear, easily accessible story. Yet, by Gauguin's insertion of illustrations and through the relationship of some to specific textual passages, we understand far more about his art. The viewer/reader is given a glimpse into some of Gauguin's thought processes that are closely connected with the paintings he wishes to describe in his book.

In Gauguin's art and writings he consistently portrayed himself in two routine ways: as a savage and as a creator. The two are interrelated, and he often expressed his desire to find the perfect balance between them, assuming that he had to become more savage in order to be a better creator. He went to Tahiti with the belief that his uncivilized nature would flourish there, that he would become a man concerned only with daily existence. Throughout the text of *Noa Noa*, Gauguin relates his evolution into

a savage. The textual discussions of Tahitian life almost read like a guidebook to the life of a savage; he writes about the wilds of nature and about the wild nature that emerges in a human in such an environment. In contrast, the images and their relationship with the text portray him in his other role: that of creator. When writing about his painting, he creates a discourse between image and text that contains a multi-layered reference to himself as a creator. This is combined with references to other creation stories in an attempt to associate himself as the maker of "divine creative work."

Paul Gauguin spent much of his life attempting to defy explanation by creating an entire mythology centered on the story of his life and his art. However, he also had a strong urge to be accepted and appreciated as an artist, an urge that he constantly tried to overcome. Eventually, the artist realized that in order to obtain the acceptance and appreciation he desired, he first had to make himself at least partially understood by the public. It is not surprising that when he decided to explain his life and his art to the public, he chose to do so in the form of a narrative combination of text and images, and that what results from this is even more enigmatic than that which it purports to explain.

APPENDIX:

GAUGUIN'S ORIGINAL TEXT FOR NOA NOA

Depuis soixante-trois jours je suis en route et je brûle d'aborder la terre désirée. Le 8 juin nous apercevions des feux bizarres se promenant en zigzag: [des] pêcheurs. Sur un ciel sombre se détachait un cône noir à dentelures. Nous tournions Moréa pour découvrir Tahiti. Quelques heures après le petit jour s'annonçait et lentement nous approchions des récifs de Tahiti pour entrer dans le passe et mouiller sans avaries dans la rade. Pour quelqu'un qui a beaucoup voyagé cette petite île n'a pas comme la baie de Rio Janeiro un aspect bien féérique. Quelques pointes de montagne où, bien après le déluge, une famille a grimpé là-haut, a fait souche; les coraux ont grimpé aussi, entouré la nouvelle île.

A 10 heures du matin je me présentai chez le Gouverneur Lacascade qui me reçut comme un homme d'importance à qui le gouvernement a confié une mission (en apparence artistique) mais surtout d'espionnage politique. Je fis tout mon possible pour dissuader le monde politique, ce fut en vain. On me croyait payé, j'assurai le contraire.

En ce temps-là le roi était mortellement malade et chaque jour on s'attendait à une catastrophe. La ville présentait un aspect singulier; d'un côté les Européens, commerçants, fonctionnaires, officiers et soldats continuaient à rire, chanter

dans les rues tandis que les naturels prenaient des airs graves, causaient à voix basse autour du palais.

Et sur rade un mouvement inusité de barques aux voiles oranges sur la mer bleue, souvent traversée par les frisons argentés de la ligne des récifs. Les habitants des îles voisines arrivaient chaque jour pour assister au dernier moment de leur roi, à la prise de possession définitive de leurs îles par les Français. C'est que leurs voix d'en haut venaient les avertir. (Chaque fois qu'un roi meurt, leurs montagnes, disaient-ils, ont des plaques sombres sur certains versants au coucher du soleil.)

Le roi mourut et dans son palais, en grande tenue d'amiral, [fut] exposé aux yeux de tous.

Je vis là la reine -- Marau elle se nommait -- ornant de fleurs et d'étoffes le salon royal. Comme le directeur des travaux publics me demandait un conseil pour arranger artistement la salle, je lui fis signe de regarder la reine qui avec ce bel instinct de la race Maorie pare gracieusement et fait un objet d'art de tout ce qu'elle touche.

-- Laissez-les faire, lui répondis-je.

Depuis peu de temps arrivé, en quelque sorte désillusionné par ces choses si loin de ce que j'avais désiré et surtout imaginé, écoeuré par toute cette trivialité Européenne, j'étais en quelque sorte aveugle. Aussi je vis en la reine déjà d'un certain âge une épaisse femme ordinaire qui a de beaux restes. Ce jour-là le côté

juif dans son sang avait tout absorbé. Je me trompais singulièrement.

Quand je la revis plus tard je compris son charme Maorie; le sang tahitien reprenait le dessus, la souvenir de son aïeul le grand chef Tati, lui donnait à elle, à son frère, [à] toute cette famille en général un côté vraiment imposant.-- Dans ses yeux comme un vague pressentiment des passions qui poussent en un instant.

Une île surgissant de l'océan et au premier soleil les plantes qui commencent à germer.

Pendant deux jours des hyménées (choeurs) chantaient. Tous en noir. Des cantiques de mort. J'ai cru entendre [la] Sonate pathétique de Beethoven.

Enterrement de Pomaré -- 6 heures départ du palais. La troupe, les autorités, des habits noirs, des casques blancs. Tous les districts marchaient en ordre, le chef portant le pavillon français. Grande masse noire. Ainsi jusqu'au district d'Arue. Là un mouvement inénarrable, en contraste avec la belle nature, amas informe de pierres de corail liées entre elles par du ciment. -- Discours de Lacascade, cliché connu traduit après par l'interprète. Discours du Pasteur protestant, puis réponse de Tati frère de la reine.

Ce fut tout. Des carrioles où s'entassaient les fonctionnaires comme au retour de courses.

Sur la route, à la débandade, l'indifférence des Français donnait l'exemple et tout ce peuple si grave depuis plusieurs jours recommençait à rire, les vahine reprenaient le bras de leur tane, dodelinant des fesses tandis que leurs larges pieds nus foulait lourdement la poussière du chemin. Arrivés près de la rivière de la Fataua éparpillement général. De place en place quelques-unes, cachées entre les cailloux, s'accroupissaient dans l'eau leurs jupes soulevées à la ceinture, purifiaient leurs hanches souillées par la poussière de la route, rafraîchissaient les jointures que la marche et la chaleur avaient irritées. Ainsi en état elles reprenaient le chemin de Papeete, -- la poitrine en avant, les deux coquillages pointus qui terminent le sein pointant la mousseline de la robe -- avec toute la souplesse et la grâce d'un animal bien portant, répandant autour d'elles ce mélange d'odeur animale et de parfums de santal, de tiare: *Teine merahi Noa Noa* maintenant très odorant, disaient-elles.

Ce fut tout. Tout rentra dans l'ordre habituel. Il y avait un roi de moins et avec lui disparaissaient les derniers vestiges d'habitudes...maories. C'était bien fini: rien que des Civilisés.

J'étais triste, venir de si loin pour . . .

Arriverai-je à retrouver une trace de ce passé si loin, si mystérieux; et le présent ne me disait rien qui vaille. Retrouver l'ancien foyer, raviver le feu au milieu de toutes ces cendres. Et pour cela bien seul sans aucun appui.

Si abattu que je sois je n'ai pas l'habitude d'abandonner la partie sans avoir tenté tout l'impossible comme le possible. Ma détermination fut bientôt prise.

Quitter au plus vite Papeete, m'éloigner du centre Européen. J'avais comme un vague pressentiment qu'en vivant complètement dans la brousse avec des naturels de Tahiti j'arriverais patiemment à vaincre la défiance de ces gens-là et que je saurais.

Un officier de gendarmerie m'offrit gracieusement sa voiture et son cheval. Je partis un matin à la recherche de ma case. A midi nous arrivions au 45e kilomètre, le district de

Mata. Ma vahine m'accompagnait (Titi elle se nommait), presque une Anglaise mais elle parlait un peu français. Ce jour-là elle avait mis sa plus belle robe, une fleur à l'oreille et son chapeau de canne à sucre par elle tressée, était orné par-dessus le cordon de fleurs en paille d'une garniture de coquillages orangés. Ses cheveux noirs déroulés sur les épaules, elle était ainsi vraiment jolie. Elle était fière d'être en voiture, elle était fière d'être élégante, elle était fière d'être la vahine d'un homme qu'elle croyait important et de gros appointements. Toute cette fierté n'avait rien de ridicule tellement leur visage est fait pour porter l'imposant. Vieux souvenirs de grands chefs (une race qui a eu une telle féodalité).

Je savais bien que tout son amour intéressé n'était composé que de choses qui à nos yeux Européens en font un *putain*, mais pour un observateur il y avait autre chose.

De tels yeux et une telle bouche ne pouvaient mentir. Il y a chez toutes l'amour tellement inné qu'intéressé ou pas intéressé c'est toujours de l'Amour.

La route fut en somme assez vite faite; quelques causeries insignifiantes et un paysage riche partout mais peu varié. Toujours sur la droite la mer, les récifs de corail et des nappes d'eau s'élevant parfois en fumée quand la rencontre sur le rocher est trop précipitée.

A midi nous arrivions au 45^e kilomètre, le district de Mataiea.

Je visitai le district et je finis par trouver une assez belle case que le propriétaire me céda en location; lui en construisit une autre à côté pour y habiter.

En revenant le lendemain soir Titi me demanda si je consentais à la prendre avec moi:

-- Plus tard, dans quelques jours quand je serai installé.

J'avais conscience que cette demi-blanche, vernissée au contact de tous ces Européens, ne remplirait pas le but que je m'étais proposé. J'en trouverai à la douzaine me disais-je. Mais la campagne n'est point la ville.

Et faut-il encore *les prendre* à la mode maorie (*mau* = saisir). Et je ne savais pas leur langue.

Les quelques jeunes filles de Mataiea qui ne vivent pas avec un tane (homme) vous regardent avec une telle franchise --

dignité sans aucune crainte -- que j'étais vraiment intimidé. Puis disait-on beaucoup étaient malades -- de ce mal que les Européens civilisés leur ont apporté en échange de leur si large hospitalité.

Au bout de quelque temps je fis savoir à Titi que je serais heureux qu'elle revienne. A Papeete elle avait cependant une terrible réputation. Successivement elle avait enterré plusieurs amants.

[D'un] côté la mer. De l'autre côté, le mango adossé à la montagne, bouchant l'ancre formidable.

Près de ma case était une autre case (Fare amu, maison manger). Près de là une pirogue. Tandis que le cocotier malade semblait un immense perroquet laissant tomber sa queue dorée, et tenant dans ses serres une immense grappe de cocos.

L'homme presque nu levait de ses deux bras une pesante hache laissant en haut son empreinte bleue sur le ciel argenté, en bas son incision sur l'arbre mort qui tout à l'heure revivrait un instant de flammes -- chaleurs séculaires accumulées chaque jour. Sur le sol pourpre de longues feuilles serpentines d'un jaune de métal, tout un vocabulaire oriental -- lettres (il me semblait) d'une langue inconnue mystérieuse. Il me semblait voir ce mot originaire d'Océanie: Atua. Dieu -- Taäta ou Takata, celui-ci arrivant jusqu'à l'Inde se retrouve partout ou dans tout (Religion de Bouddha): *Aux yeux de Tathagata, toutes les plus parfaites*

magnificences des Rois et de leurs ministres ne sont que comme du crachat et de la poussière.

mais A ses yeux la pureté et l'impureté sont comme la danse des six nagas.

A ses yeux la recherche de la voie du Bouddha est semblable à des fleurs placées devant les yeux.

Une femme rangeait dans la pirogue quelques filets et l'horizon de la mer bleue était souvent interrompu par le vert de la crête des lames sur les brisants de corail.

J'allai ce soir fumer une cigarette sur le sable au bord de la mer. Le soleil arrivait rapidement à l'horizon, commençant à se cacher derrière l'île Morea que j'avais à ma droite. Par opposition de lumière les montagnes se dessinaient noires puissamment sur le ciel incendié. Toutes ces arêtes comme d'anciens châteaux crénelés. Tandis que toutes ces terres croulent dans le déluge, il reste encore de toute cette féodalité disparue pour toujours le cimier protecteur, celui-là plus près des cieux regardant les eaux profondes, et majestueusement, l'ironie à la fissure -- compatissant peut-être à cette foule engloutie pour avoir touché à l'arbre de la Science s'attaquant à la tête-sphinx.

Vite la nuit arriva. Morea dormait encore cette fois. Je m'endormis plus tard dans mon lit. Silence d'une nuit tahitienne.

Seuls les battements de mon cœur se faisaient entendre. Les roseaux alignés et distancés de ma case s'apercevaient de

mon lit avec les filtrations de la lune tel un instrument de musique. Pipo chez nos anciens, Vivo chez eux il se nomme -- mais silencieux -- (par souvenirs il parle la nuit). Je m'endormis à cette musique. Au-dessus de moi le grand toit élevé de feuilles de pandanus, les lézards y demeurant. Je pouvais dans mon sommeil m'imaginer l'espace au-dessus de ma tête, la voûte céleste, aucune prison où on étouffe. Ma case c'était l'Espace, la Liberté.

J'étais là bien seul, de part et d'autre nous nous observions.

Le surlendemain j'avais épuisé mes provisions; je m'étais imaginé que je trouverais avec de l'argent tout ce qu'il faut pour se nourrir. La nourriture se trouve bien sur les arbres, dans la montagne, dans la mer, mais il faut savoir grimper à un arbre élevé, aller dans la montagne et revenir chargé de fardeaux pesants, savoir prendre le poisson, plonger et arracher dans le fond de la mer le coquillage solidement attaché au caillou. J'étais donc là, moi l'homme civilisé, pour un moment bien en dessous du sauvage, et comme l'estomac vide je songeais tristement à ma situation un indigène me fit des signes, me criant dans sa langue: viens manger. Je compris. Mais j'eus honte et d'un signe de tête je refusai. Quelques minutes après un enfant déposait silencieusement sur le bord de ma porte quelques aliments proprement entourés de feuilles vertes fraîchement cueillies, puis se retirait. J'avais faim, silencieusement aussi

j'acceptai. Un peu plus tard l'homme passait et la figure aimable, sans s'arrêter me dit un seul mot: -- Paia? Je compris vaguement: Es-tu satisfait?

Par terre sous des touffes de feuilles larges de giraumons j'apercevais une petite tête brune avec des yeux tranquilles. Un petit enfant m'examinait puis se sauvait craintif lorsque mes yeux avaient rencontré les siens.

Ces êtres noirs, ces dents de cannibale amenaient sur ma bouche le mot de sauvages.

Pour eux aussi j'étais le sauvage. Avec raison peut-être.

Pendant qu'elle examinait avec beaucoup d'intérêt quelques tablettes Je commençais à travailler, notes, croquis de toutes sortes. Tout m'aveuglait, m'éblouissait dans le paysage. Venant de l'Europe j'étais toujours incertain d'une couleur, cherchant midi à quatorze heures: cela était cependant si simple de mettre naturellement sur ma toile un rouge et un bleu. Dans les ruisseaux des formes en or m'enchantaient. Pourquoi hésitais-je à faire couler sur ma toile tout cet or et toute cette réjouissance de soleil? Probablement de vieilles habitudes d'Europe, toute cette timidité d'expression de nos races abâtardies.

Pour bien m'initier à ce caractère d'un visage tahitien, à tout ce charme d'un sourire maorie, je désirais depuis longtemps faire un portrait d'une voisine de vraie race tahitienne.

Je le lui demandai un jour qu'elle s'était enhardie à venir regarder dans ma case des images photographies de tableaux.

Elle regardait spécialement avec intérêt la photographie de l'Olympia de Manet. Avec le peu de mots que j'avais appris dans la langue (depuis deux mois je ne parlais pas un mot de français) je l'interrogeais. Elle me dit que cette Olympia était bien belle: je souris à cette réflexion et j'en fus ému. Elle avait le sens du beau (École des Beaux-Arts qui trouve cela horrible). Elle ajouta tout d'un coup, rompant le silence qui préside à une pensée: -- C'est ta femme?

-- Oui. Je fis ce mensonge. Moi! le tane de l'Olympia!

Pendant qu'elle examinait avec beaucoup d'intérêt quelques tableaux religieux, des primitifs italiens, j'essayai d'esquisser quelques-uns de ses traits, ce sourire surtout si énigmatique.

Je lui demandai à faire son portrait. Elle fit une moue désagréable: -- Aita (non) dit-elle d'un ton presque courroucé et elle se sauva.

De ce refus j'en fus bien attristé.

Une heure après elle revint dans une belle robe. Était-ce une lutte intérieure, ou le caprice (caractère très maorie) ou bien encore un mouvement de coquetterie qui ne veut se livrer qu'après résistance?

Caprice, désir du fruit défendu. Elle sentait bon elle était parée. J'eus conscience que dans mon examen de peintre il y avait comme une demande tacite de se livrer, se livrer pour toujours sans pouvoir se reprendre, une fouille perspicace de ce qui était

au-dedans. Peu jolie en somme comme règle européenne: belle pourtant. Tous ses traits avaient une harmonie raphaélique dans la rencontre des courbes, la bouche modelée par un sculpteur parlant toutes les langues du langage et du baiser, de la joie et de la souffrance; cette mélancolie de l'amertume mêlée au plaisir, de la passivité résidant dans la domination. Toute une peur de l'inconnu.

Et je travaillai hâtivement: je me doutais que cette volonté n'était pas fixe. Portrait de femme: Vahine no te tiare. Je travaillai vite avec passion. Ce fut un portrait ressemblant à ce que mes yeux *voilés par mon coeur* ont aperçu. Je crois surtout qu'il fut ressemblant à l'intérieur. Ce feu robuste d'une force contenue. Elle avait une fleur à l'oreille qui écoutait son parfum. Et son front dans sa majesté, par des lignes surélevées rappelait cette phrase de Poe: Il n'y a pas de beauté parfaite sans une certaine singularité dans les proportions].

Quelque temps de travail. Seul. Je voyais bien des jeunes femmes à l'oeil tranquille, je devinais qu'elles voulaient être prises sans un mot -- prise brutale. En quelque sorte désir de viol. Les vieux me disaient en parlant d'une d'elles: Mau tera -- *Prends celle-ci*. Timide je n'osais me résigner à cet effort.

Je fis savoir à Titi que je voulais qu'elle vienne. Elle vint. Mais déjà civilisée, habituée au luxe du fonctionnaire, elle ne me convint longtemps. Je m'en séparai.

De nouveau seul . . . Je devenais chaque jour un peu plus sauvage, mes voisins étaient presque mes amis -- habillé comme eux, nourri comme eux. Le soir, j'allais à la maison où les indigènes d'alentour se réunissaient. Là après une prière consciencieusement dite par un vieillard, en refrain par tout le monde, les chants commençaient. Musique étrange sans instruments. Dans les intervalles des histoires pour rire ou des propositions sages. Une d'elles me surprit. Le vieux disait: -- "Dans votre village on aperçoit par-ci par-là des maisons qui tombent en ruine, des toits pourris entrouverts où l'eau passe quand par hasard il pleut. Pourquoi? Tout le monde se doit d'être abrité. Le bois, le feuillage pour le toit ne manquent pas. Je demande à ce qu'on reconstruise de vastes maisons en remplacement de celles-là; chacun y donnera successivement la main (Union fait la force)." Et tout le monde sans exception d'applaudir:

Cela est bien. -- Voté à l'unanimité.

Je me couchai ce soir-là avec l'admiration de ce peuple sage et le lendemain j'allai en quête du commencement d'exécution de ces maisons. Personne n'y pensait plus. J'interrogeai quelques-uns. Pas de réponse sinon quelques sourires significatifs sur de vastes fronts rêveurs.

Il y a loin de la coupe aux lèvres. Et pourquoi ce travail? Les dieux ne nous ont-ils pas donné tous les jours notre subsistance? Le soleil se lève chaque jour serein. Demain. Peut-

être. Connais pas. Est-ce légèreté? insouciance? . . . ou après réflexion, philosophie: ne prends goût de luxe, etc. Je me retirai. Pangloss, tout est pour le mieux dans le meilleur des mondes.

Chaque jour se fait meilleur pour moi. Je finis par comprendre la langue assez bien. Mes voisins -- trois d'à côté, les autres de distance en distance -- me regardent presque [comme un] des leurs; mes pieds nus au contact quotidien du caillou se sont familiarisés avec le sol, mon corps presque toujours nu ne craint plus le soleil; la civilisation s'en va petit à petit de moi et je commence à penser simplement, n'avoir que peu de haine pour mon prochain et je fonctionne animalelement, librement -- avec la certitude du lendemain pareil au jour présent; tous les matins le soleil se lève pour moi comme pour tout le monde, serein; je deviens insouciant, tranquille et aimant.

J'ai un ami naturel, venu près de moi chaque jour naturellement, sans intérêt. Mes images colorées, mes travaux dans le bois l'ont surpris et mes réponses à ses questions l'ont instruit. Il n'y a pas de jour quand je travaille où il ne vienne me regarder. -- Un jour que lui confiant mes outils je lui demandai d'essayer une sculpture, il me regarda bien étonné et me dit simplement avec sincérité que je n'étais pas comme les autres hommes et, le premier peut-être dans la société il me dit que j'étais utile aux autres. Enfant. . . il faut l'être pour penser qu'un artiste est quelque chose d'utile.

silenc Ce jeune homme était parfaitement beau et nous fûmes très amis. Quelquefois le soir quand je me reposais de ma journée, il me faisait des questions de jeune sauvage voulant savoir bien des choses de l'amour en Europe, questions qui souvent m'embarrassaient.

natur Un jour je voulais avoir, pour sculpter, un arbre de bois de rose, morceau assez important et qui ne fût pas creux. -- Il faut pour cela, me dit-il, aller dans la montagne à certain endroit où je connais plusieurs beaux arbres qui pourraient te satisfaire. Si tu veux je t'y mènerai et nous le rapporterons tous deux.

Nous partîmes de bon matin.

le ré Les sentiers indiens sont à Tahiti assez difficiles pour un Européen: entre deux montagnes qu'on ne saurait gravir existe une fissure où l'eau se fait jour à travers des rochers détachés, roulés, reposant encore puis repris un jour de torrent qui les roule plus bas, ainsi de suite jusqu'à la mer.

comp De chaque côté du ruisseau cascasant, un semblant de chemin, des arbres pêle-mêle, des fougères monstrueuses, toute végétation s'ensauvant, se faisant impénétrable de plus en plus à mesure que l'on monte vers le centre de l'île.

délic Nous allions tous deux nus avec le linge à la ceinture et la hache à la main, traversant maintes fois la rivière pour reprendre un bout de sentier que mon compagnon connaissait comme par l'odorat, si peu visible, si ombragé. -- Le silence complet, seul le bruit de l'eau gémissant sur le rocher, monotone comme le

silence. Et nous étions bien deux, deux amis, lui tout jeune homme et moi presque un vieillard, de corps et d'âme, de vices de civilisation: d'illusions perdues. Son corps souple d'animal avait de gracieuses formes, il marchait devant moi sans sexe . . .

De toute cette jeunesse, de cette parfaite harmonie avec la nature qui nous entourait il se dégagait une beauté, un parfum (noa noa) qui enchantaient mon âme d'artiste. De cette amitié si bien cimentée par attraction mutuelle du simple au composé, l'amour en moi prenait éclosion.

Et nous étions seulement tous deux.

J'eus comme un pressentiment de crime, le désir d'inconnu, le réveil du mal. Puis la lassitude du rôle de mâle qui doit toujours être fort, protecteur; de lourdes épaules à supporter. Etre une minute l'être faible qui aime et obéit.

Je m'approchai, sans peur des lois, le trouble aux tempes.

Le sentier était fini, il fallait traverser la rivière; mon compagnon se détournait en ce moment, me présentant la poitrine.

L'androgynie avait disparu: ce fut bien un jeune homme; ses yeux innocents présentaient l'aspect de la limpidité des eaux. Le calme soudain rentra dans mon âme et cette fois je goûtai délicieusement la fraîcheur du ruisseau, m'y trempant avec délices.

-- Toe toe me dit-il (c'est froid).

-- Oh non répondis-je et cette négation, répondant à mon désir antérieur, s'enfonça comme un écho dans la montagne, avec âpreté.

Je m'enfonçai vivement dans le taillis devenu de plus en plus sauvage; l'enfant continuait sa route, toujours l'oeil limpide. Il n'avait rien compris; moi seul portais le fardeau d'une mauvaise pensée, toute une civilisation m'avait devancé sans le mal et m'avait éduqué.

Nous arrivions au but. A cet endroit des deux côtés les escarpes de la montagne s'évasaient et derrière un rideau d'abres enchevêtrés, un semblant de plateau caché mais non ignoré.

Plusieurs arbres (bois de rose) étendaient là leurs immenses ramages. Tous deux, sauvages, nous attaquâmes à la hache un magnifique arbre qu'il fallut détruire pour avoir une branche convenable à mes désirs. Je frappai avec rage et les mains ensanglantées je coupais avec le plaisir d'une brutalité assouvie, d'une destruction de je ne sais quoi.

Avec la cadence du bruit de la hache, je chantais:

Coupe par le pied la forêt tout entière (des désirs)

Coupe en toi l'amour de toi-même comme avec la main en automne

on couperait le Lotus.

Bien détruit en effet tout mon vieux stock de civilisé. Je revins tranquille, me sentant désormais un autre homme, un Maorie. Tous deux nous portions gaiement notre lourd fardeau, et je pus encore admirer devant moi les formes gracieuses de mon jeune ami, et cela tranquille -- formes robustes comme l'arbre que nous portions. L'arbre sentait la rose, noa noa.

Nous étions l'après-midi de retour, fatigués. Il me dit: -- Tu es content? -- Oui; et dans moi je redis: Oui. J'étais décidément tranquille désormais.

Je n'ai pas donné un seul coup de ciseau dans ce morceau de bois sans avoir des souvenirs d'une douce quiétude, d'un parfum, d'une victoire et d'un rajeunissement.

Par la vallée du Punaru, la grande fissure de l'île, on arrive au plateau de Tamanou. De là on peut voir le Diadème, l'Orofena et l'Arorai. Le centre de l'île. Bien des hommes m'en avaient parlé et je formai le projet de m'isoler quelques jours: -- Mais la nuit que feras-tu? tu seras tourmenté par les tupapau. Il faut que tu sois fou ou téméraire pour aller déranger les esprits de la montagne. -- Tout cela était bien fait pour exciter ma curiosité.

Je partis donc un bon matin. Je suivis près de deux heures un sentier qui longeait la rivière du Punaru, puis je traversai la rivière mainte et mainte fois. Les murailles devenaient de chaque côté de plus en plus droites; des cailloux énormes dans la rivière. Force me fut de continuer mon voyage presque continuellement

dans la rivière: tantôt de l'eau jusqu'au genou tantôt jusqu'aux épaules.

Entre deux murailles excessivement élevées le soleil pointait à peine. Le ciel bleu. On apercevait presque les étoiles en plein jour.

5 heures. Le jour diminuait et je commençai enfin à me préoccuper de ma nuit à passer lorsque j'aperçus dans un coin un hectare de terrain presque plat où pêle-mêle: les fougères, les bananiers sauvages, puis des bourao. Heureusement quelques bananes mûres.

A la hâte je fis un feu de bois: cuisson des bananes -- mon repas. Et tant bien que mal au pied d'un arbre dont les branches, sur lesquelles j'avais entrelacé des feuilles du bananier, me faisaient un abri en cas de pluie, je me couchai.

Il faisait froid, j'étais trempé de mon voyage toute la journée dans l'eau froide: je dormis mal. J'avais la crainte que des cochons sauvages ne vinssent m'écorcher les jambes, aussi j'avais passé à mon poignet la corde de ma hache.

Nuit noire: impossible de voir. -- Près de ma tête une poussière phosphorescente m'intriguait singulièrement et je souris en pensant à ces bons Maories qui m'avaient raconté précédemment ces histoires de tupapau. Je sus plus tard que cette poussière lumineuse était un petit champignon qui pousse dans les endroits humides, sur les branches mortes comme celles qui m'avaient servi à faire du feu.

Le lendemain au petit jour je repartis et continuai ma route.

De plus en plus sauvage le rivi re devient de plus en plus cascade, contournant de plus en plus. D'immenses crevettes me regardaient semblant me dire: -- Que viens-tu faire ici? Qui es-tu?

Des anguilles s culaires.

Souvent je suis oblig  de grimper, passant de branche en branche.

Arriv    un d tour aper u: -- tableau de Pape moe. . . . Je n'avais fait aucun bruit. Lorsqu'elle eut fini de boire elle prit de l'eau dans ses mains et se la fit couler entre les seins; puis comme une antilope inqui te, et [qui] d'instinct devine l' tranger, elle scruta le fourr  o  j' tais cach . Vivement elle plongea en criant ce mot: -- Taehae . . . (f roce).

Pr cipitamment je regardai le fond de l'eau: disparue. -- Une  norme anguille seule serpentait entre les petits cailloux du fond . . .

Depuis quelque temps je m' tais assombri. Mon travail s'en ressentait, je manquais de beaucoup de documents. Il est vrai que j' tais divorc  depuis plusieurs mois. Je n'avais plus   entendre ce babil de la vahine m'interrogeant sans cesse sur les m mes choses et moi r pondant invariablement la m me histoire. Je r solus de partir quelque temps en voyage autour de l' le.

Tandis que je faisais quelques paquets légers pour le besoin de ma route et que je mettais de l'ordre dans toutes mes études, mon voisin l'ami Anani me regardait inquiet. Il se décida enfin à me demander si je voulais partir. Je lui répondis que non, que j'allais seulement me promener quelque temps, que je reviendrais. Il ne me croyait pas et pleura. Sa femme vint le rejoindre et me dit qu'elle m'aimait, que je n'avais pas besoin d'argent pour vivre là, que je pourrai un jour reposer là et elle me montrait dans son terrain près de sa case une place ornée d'un arbrisseau. J'eus le désir d'y reposer toujours, certain que dans l'éternité personne ne viendrait plus me déranger: -- Vous autres Européens, vous promettez toujours de rester et quand enfin on vous aime vous partez pour revenir dites-vous, mais vous ne revenez jamais. Je n'osai mentir.

-- Mais enfin je reviendrai dans quelques jours je la promets. Plus tard je verrai.

Enfin je partis.

VOYAGE AUTOUR DE L'ILE

M'écartant du chemin qui borde la mer je m'enfonce dans un fourré qui va assez loin dans la montagne. Arrive dans une petite vallée. Là quelques habitants qui veulent vivre encore comme autrefois. Tableaux *Matamua*, Autrefois et de *Hina maruru* . . .

. . . Je continue ma route. Arrivé à Taravao (extrémité de l'île), le gendarme me prête son cheval. Je file sur la côte Est peu fréquentée par les Européens. Arrivé à Faone petit district qui annonce celui d'Itia, un indigène m'interpelle:

-- Eh! l'homme qui fait des hommes (il sait que je suis peintre), viens manger avec nous! (Haere mai ta maha) -- la phrase hospitalière.

Je ne me fais pas prier, son visage est si doux. Je descends de cheval; il le prend et l'attache à une branche, sans aucune servilité, simplement et avec adresse.

J'entre dans une maison où plusieurs hommes, femmes et enfants sont réunis, assis par terre, causant et fumant.

-- Où vas-tu? me dit une belle Maorie d'une quarantaine d'années.

-- Je vais à Itia.

-- Pourquoi faire?

Je ne sais quelle idée me traversa la cervelle. Je lui répondis:

-- Pour chercher une femme. Itia en a beaucoup et des jolies.

-- Tu en veux une?

-- Oui.

-- Si tu veux je vais t'en donner une. C'est ma fille.

-- Est-elle jeune?

-- Eha [oui].

-- Est-elle jolie?

-- Eha.

-- Est-elle bien portante?

-- Eha.

-- C'est bien va me la chercher.

Elle sortit un quart d'heure et tandis qu'on apportait le repas -- des maïore, des bananes sauvages et quelques crevettes -- la vieille rentra suivie d'une grande jeune fille un petit paquet à la main.

A travers la robe de mousseline rose excessivement transparente on voyait la peau dorée des épaules et des bras; deux boutons pointaient dru à la poitrine. Son visage charmant me parut différent des autres que j'avais vus dans l'île jusqu'à présent et ses cheveux poussés comme la brousse, légèrement crépus. Au soleil une orgie de chromes. Je sus qu'elle était originaire des Tonga.

Quand elle fut assise près de moi je lui fis quelques questions:

-- Tu n'as pas peur de moi?

-- Aïta (non).

-- Veux-tu toujours habiter ma case?

-- Eha.

-- Tu n'as jamais été malade?

-- Aïta.

Ce fut tout. Et le coeur me battait tandis qu'elle, impassible, rangeait devant moi par terre sur une grande feuille de bananier les aliments qui m'étaient offerts. Je mangeais, quoique de bon appétit, timidement. Cette jeune fille une enfant d'environ treize ans me charmait et m'épouvantait: Que se passait-il dans son âme? et dans ce contrat si hâtivement conçu et signé j'avais la pudeur hésitante de la signature, moi presque un vieillard.

Peut-être la mère avait ordonné, débattant chez elle le marché. Et pourtant chez la grande enfant, la fierté indépendante de toute cette race, la sérénité d'une chose louable. La lèvre moqueuse quoique tendre indiquait bien que le danger était pour moi non pour elle. Je ne dirai pas sans peur je sortis de la case. Je pris mon cheval et je montai.

La jeune fille suivit derrière; la mère, un homme, deux jeunes femmes ses tantes disait-elle, suivirent aussi. Nous revenions à Taravao, à 9 kilomètres de Faone.

Un kilomètre plus loin on me dit:

-- Parahi teie -- Réside ici.

Je descendis et j'entrai dans une grande case proprement tenue -- et surtout presque l'opulence. L'opulence des biens de la terre, de jolies nattes par terre, sur du foin . . . Un ménage assez jeune, gracieux au possible y demeurait, et la jeune fille s'assit près de sa mère qu'elle me présenta. Un silence -- de l'eau

fraîche que nous bûmes à la ronde comme une offrande, et la jeune mère l'oeil ému et humides me dit: -- Tu es bon?

Mon examen de conscience fait je répondis avec trouble:

-- Oui.

-- Tu rendras ma fille heureuse?

-- Oui.

-- Dans huit jours qu'elle revienne. Si elle n'est pas heureuse elle te quittera.

Un long silence. Nous sortîmes et de nouveau à cheval je repartis. Elles suivaient derrière. Nous rencontrâmes sur la route plusieurs personnes:

-- Et quoi, tu es maintenant la vahine d'un Français? Sois heureuse. -- Bonne chance.

Cette question des deux mères m'inquiétait. Je demandais à la vieille qui m'avait offert sa fille: -- Pourquoi as-tu menti? La mère de Tehamana (ainsi ma femme se nommait) me répondit: -- L'autre aussi est sa mère, sa mère nourricière.

Nous arrivâmes à Taravao. Je rendis le cheval au gendarme. La femme de celui-ci (une Française) me dit (sans malice du reste mais aussi sans finesse): -- Quoi! vous ramenez avec vous une gourgandine . . . Et ses yeux colères déshabillaient la jeune fille impassible devenue altière. -- La décrépitude regardait la nouvelle floraison, la vertu de la loi soufflait impurement sur l'impudeur native mais pure de la confiance, la foi. Et sur ce ciel si beau je vis douloureusement ce nuage sale de fumée. J'eus

honte de ma race, mes yeux se détachèrent de cette boue -- vite je l'oubliai -- pur se fixer sur cet or que j'aimais déjà celui-là, je m'en souviens.

Les adieux de famille se firent à Taravao chez le Chinois qui vend là de tout -- et les hommes et les bêtes. Nous prîmes tous deux ma fiancée et moi la voiture publique qui nous menait à 25 kilomètres de là, à Mataiea -- chez moi.

Ma nouvelle femme était peu bavarde, mélancolique et moqueuse. Tous deux nous nous observions: elle était impénétrable, je fus vite vaincu dans cette lutte. Malgré toutes mes promesses intérieures mes nerfs prenaient vite le dessus et je fus en peu de temps pour elle un livre ouvert.

Une semaine se passa pendant laquelle je fus d'une "enfance" qui m'était inconnue. Je l'aimais et je le lui dis ce qui la faisait sourire (elle le savait bien!). Elle semblait m'aimer et ne me le disait point. Quelquefois, la nuit, des éclairs . . . sillonnaient l'or de la peau de Tehamana. C'était tout. C'était beaucoup.

Cette huitaine rapide comme un jour, comme une heure, était écoulée: elle me demanda à aller voir sa mère à Faone. -- Chose promise.

Elle partit et tout triste je la mis dans la voiture publique avec quelques piastres dans son mouchoir pour payer la voiture,

donner du rhum à son père . . . Ce fut comme un Adieu.

Reviendrait-elle?

Plusieurs jours après elle revint . . .

Je me remis au travail et le bonheur succédait au bonheur.

Chaque jour au petit lever du soleil, la lumière était radieuse dans mon logis. L'or du visage de Tehamana inondait tout l'alentour et tous deux dans un ruisseau voisin nous allions naturellement, simplement comme au Paradis nous rafraîchir.

La vie de tous les jours. -- Tehamana se livre de plus en plus, docile, aimante; le noa noa tahitien embaume tout. Moi je n'ai plus la conscience du jour et des heures, du Mal et du Bien: tout est beau, tout est bien. D'instinct quand je travaille, quand je rêve, Tehamana se tait. Elle sait toujours quand il faut me parler sans me déranger.

Conversations sur ce qui se fait en Europe, sur Dieu, les dieux. Je l'instruis elle m'instruit . . .

La vie de tous les jours. Dans le lit le soir, conversations. Les étoiles l'intéressent beaucoup; elle me demande comment on nomme en français l'étoile du matin, celle du soir. Elle comprend difficilement que la terre tourne autour du soleil. A son tour elle me nomme les étoiles dans sa langue.

départ [La naissance des étoiles].

Roua (grande est son origine) dormait avec sa femme, la terre ténébreuse; elle donna naissance à son roi le sol, puis au crépuscule, puis aux ténèbres; mais alors Roua répudia ici cette femme.

Roua (grande est son origine) dormait avec la femme dite "grand-réunion". Elle donna naissance aux reines des Cieux, les Etoiles, puis à l'Etoile "Faïti", Etoile du soir.

Le Roi des Cieux dorés, le seul roi, dormait avec sa femme Fanoui. D'elle est né Fauroua (Vénus), Etoile du matin -- le roi Fauroua qui donne des lois à la nuit et au jour, aux étoiles, à la Lune, au Soleil et sert de guide aux marins.

Il fit voile à gauche, vers le nord; et là dormant avec sa femme il donna naissance à l'Etoile rouge, cette étoile rouge qui brille le soir, sous deux faces . . . Etoile rouge, ce Dieu, qui vole dans l'ouest, prépara sa pirogue, pirogue du grand jour, qui cingle vers les cieux. Il fit voile au lever du Soleil.

Rehoua. Rehoua s'avance dans l'étendue. Il dormait avec sa femme Oura Tanaïpa; d'eux sont nés les Rois, les Gémeaux en face des Pléiades.

Gémeaux. Ils étaient de Bora-Bora et ayant entendu leurs parents parler de les séparer, ils quittèrent la maison paternelle, allèrent ensemble à Raiatéea, puis à Ouhainé, à Eïmeo et à Otaïti. Leur mère, inquiète, se mit à les chercher, aussitôt après leur

départ; mais elle arrivait toujours trop tard dans ces différentes îles. Cependant à Otaïti, elle apprit qu'ils y'étaient encore et se cachaient dans les montagnes; enfin elle les découvrit, mais ils se sauvèrent devant elle jusqu'au sommet de la plus haute montagne; et de là, au moment, où tout éplorée elle croyait enfin les atteindre, ils s'envolèrent vers les cieux, où ils figurent encore parmi les constellations.

luxo Ce qu'elle ne voulut jamais admettre c'est que ces étoiles filantes, fréquentes en ce pays et qui traversent le ciel lentement, mélancoliquement, ne soient des Tupapaüs.

Je fus un jour obligé d'aller à Papeete; j'avais promis de revenir le soir même. Une voiture qui revenait le soir, à moitié route me ramène: je fus obligé de faire le reste à pied.

des Il était une heure du matin quand je rentrai. N'ayant à ce moment que très peu de luminaire à la maison ma provision devait être renouvelée. La lampe s'était éteinte et quand je rentrai la chambre était dans l'obscurité. J'eus comme peur et surtout défiance. Sûrement l'oiseau s'est envolé. J'allumai des allumettes et je vis sur le lit [Manao] Tupapau.

donne... un nouveau nom à l'enfant est une grande chose.
souv Elle revint à elle la pauvre enfant et je m'évertuai à lui redonner confiance. -- Ne me laisse plus seule ainsi sans lumière! Qu'as-tu fait à la ville? Tu as été voir des femmes, de celles qui vont au marché boire et danser puis se donnent aux officiers, aux matelots, à tout le monde?

Je fus invité à une noce, une vraie noce légale que les missionnaires ont essayé d'imposer aux nouveaux fidèles chrétiens -- au jour dit.

Sous un toit improvisé fait rapidement par tout le monde, gracieusement décoré de fleurs, de feuilles, une grande table. Parents, amis assistent, et on mange ce jour-là avec le plus grand luxe de mets. Petits cochons tout entiers rôtis sur des cailloux chauds, grande quantité de poissons, maioré, bananes sauvages, taro, etc.

L'institutrice de l'endroit (une jeune fille presque blanche) prenait un authentique mari, authentique Maorie, fils du chef de Punaauia. L'évêque protestant qui protégeait la jeune fille sortie des écoles *religieuses* de Papeete, imposait le mariage, et cela hâtivement, à cette jeune fille avec ce jeune chef. Là-bas ce que veut missionnaire Dieu le veut.

Quand au bout d'une heure tout le monde a beaucoup mangé et bu, les discours nombreux se récitent avec ordre et méthode, éloquence et imprévu. Savoir (des deux familles en présence) qui donnera un nouveau nom à la mariée est une grosse affaire, souvent même la discussion devient presque batailleuse. Ce jour-là il n'en fut rien; tout fut tranquille, tout le monde heureux, joyeux et pas mal ivre. Mas pauvre vahine entraînée par quelques-unes (je ne la surveillais pas) en sortit ivre morte et ce fut

pénible pour moi de la ramener au logis, bien bonne mais bien pesante.

Au centre de la table la cheffesse admirable de dignité, parée d'une robe de velours orangé: costume prétentieux, bizarre, un semblant de costume de foire. Et pourtant la grâce innée de ce peuple, la conscience de son rang ornait toute cette défroque: au milieu de toutes ces fleurs, ces mets tahitiens, son parfum était un des plus noa noa.

Près d'elle se tenait une aïeule centenaire, masque de mort que la rangée intacte de ses dents de cannibale rendait encore plus terrible. Sur sa joue, en tatouage, une marque sombre indécise dans sa forme, comme une lettre. J'avais déjà vu des tatouages mais pas comme celui-là, qui sûrement était Européen. (Autrefois me dit-on les missionnaires sévissaient contre la luxure et marquaient quelques-unes à la joue comme un avertissement de l'enfer, ce qui les couvrait de honte, non la honte du péché commis mais le ridicule d'une marque distinctive). Je compris alors cette défiance aujourd'hui du Maorie vis-à-vis des Européens.

Des années se sont passées, entre l'aïeule marquée par le prêtre et la jeune fille mariée par le prêtre . . . La marque existe toujours.

Cinq mois plus tard la jeune mariée mit au monde un bébé bien conformé . . .

Fureur des parents qui voulurent la séparation. Le jeune homme ne l'entendit point de cette oreille-là: -- Puisque nous nous aimons qu'importe. Nous avons l'habitude d'adopter les enfants des autres. J'adopte celui-là.

Mais pourquoi l'Evêque s'est-il tant remué pour hâter le mariage légal? Les mauvaises langues prétendent que . . .

Nous aimons mieux croire à l'ange de l'Annonciation.

PECHE AUX THONS.

Depuis environ quinze jours les mouches, rares auparavant, se montraient en nombre et devenaient insupportables. Et tous les Maories de se réjouir. Les bonites et les thons allaient venir du large. Et de vérifier la solidité des lignes, des hameçons.

Femmes, enfants, tous donnaient la main à traîner le long du rivage des filets, ou plutôt de longues barrières en feuilles de cocotier, les traîner sur les coraux qui parquent le fond de la mer, entre la terre et les récifs. Ils arrivent ainsi à prendre un petit poisson dont les thons sont friands.

Le jour vint où on lança à la mer deux grandes pirogues accouplées portant à l'avant une très longue perche que l'on peut relever vivement, avec deux cordes allant à l'arrière. Avec ce moyen quand le poisson a mordu il est relevé de suite et amené dans l'embarcation.

On sort en dehors des récifs et on va loin au large. Une tortue nous regarde passer. Nous arrivons à un endroit où la mer est très profonde et qu'ils appellent le trou aux thons: là où la nuit ils s'endorment (bien profond) à l'abri des requins. Un nuage d'oiseaux de mer surveille les thons: quand ils viennent tout à fait à la surface, ils se laissent tomber à la mer et remontent avec un lambeau de chair au bec . . . De tous côtés le carnage.

Comme je demandais pourquoi on ne filait pas une longue ligne de fond dans le trou aux thons, on me répondit que c'était un endroit sacré. Là réside le Dieu de la mer.

Légende de Roua hatou:

Ce Dieu espèce de Neptune dormait au fond des mers dans cet endroit.

Un pêcheur commit l'imprudence d'y aller pêcher, et son hameçon s'étant accroché aux cheveux du Dieu, le Dieu fut éveillé. Furieux, il monta à la surface, pour voir qui avait eu l'audace de troubler ainsi son sommeil; et quand il vit que le coupable était un homme, il décida, aussitôt, que toute la race humaine périrait pour cette insulte. Le seul coupable fut épargné.

Le Dieu lui dit d'aller, avec toute sa famille, sur le Toa marama, qui, d'après les uns est une pirogue, d'après les autres

une île ou une montagne, mais que je nommerai Arche.

Remarquant seulement que Toa marama signifie guerrier de la lune, ce qui fait supposer que l'Arche quelconque et l'ensemble de l'événement du cataclysme ont quelque rapport avec la Lune.

Quand le pêcheur et sa famille se furent rendus à l'endroit indiqué, les eaux de la mer commencèrent à monter; et couvrant jusqu'aux montagnes les plus élevées firent périr tous les êtres, à l'exception de ceux qui étaient sur ou dans le Toa marama, et qui, plus tard, repeuplèrent les îles ou la terre.

Par le patron de la barque un homme fut désigné pour jeter l'hameçon dehors de la pirogue. Quelque temps aucun thon ne voulait mordre. -- Un autre fut appelé. Cette fois un superbe poisson mordit, fit ployer la perche . . .

Quatre solides bras soulevaient l'arbuste et, les cordes de l'arrière tirées, le thon commençait à être amené à la surface. Un requin sauta sur sa proie: quelques coups de dents, et nous n'amenions plus dans la barque qu'une tête de l'animal. La pêche commençait mal.

Mon tour arriva; je fus désigné. Quelques instants et nous pêchions un grand thon: quelques coups de bâton sur la tête et l'animal, frémissant de l'agonie secouait son corps transformé en miroir, paillettes aux mille feux.

Une seconde fois nous fûmes heureux: décidément le Français portait chance! -- Tous de s'écrier que j'étais un homme

de bien et moi tout glorieux je ne disais pas non. Jusqu'au soir nous fîmes la pêche.

Quand la provision du petit poisson-amorce fut épuisée le soleil incendiait de rouge l'horizon. Nous préparâmes le retour. Dix magnifiques thons surchargeaient le pirogue.

Pendant qu'on mettait tout en ordre, je demandai à un jeune garçon pourquoi tous ces rires et paroles échangées à l'oreille au moment où mes deux thons s'amenaient dans la pirogue. Il refusa de m'expliquer, mais j'insistai connaissant le peu de résistance du Maorie, sa faiblesse quand énergiquement on le presse. Il me raconta alors que le poisson pris par l'hameçon à la mâchoire du dessous signifie infidélité de votre vahine pendant votre absence à la pêche. Je souris, incrédule. Et nous revînmes.

La nuit aux Tropiques s'avance vite. Vingt-deux bras vigoureux enfonçaient la pagaie dans la mer en criant, s'excitant en cadence. Le sillage en grésil phosphoresçait et j'eus la sensation d'une course folle, suivie par les esprits mystérieux de l'océan et les poissons curieux qui nous accompagnaient, sautant en troupeau.

Au bout de deux heures nous approchions de l'entrée des récifs où la mer déferle vigoureusement. Endroit dangereux à passer à cause de la barre . . . Il faut pour cela bien présenter le devant de la pirogue à la lame; mais les indigènes sont adroits et

non sans une sensation de crainte je suivis la manoeuvre qui s'exécuta fort bien.

Devant nous le rivage éclairé par des feux mouvants (torches immenses faites avec des branches sèches de cocotiers). La mer, le sol éclairé par ces feux -- et les familles attendant; les uns assis immobiles, les autres, les enfants, sautant, jetant mille cris aigus . . . Un vigoureux élan de la pirogue qui montait sur le sable.

Tout notre butin rangé sur le sable. Le patron coupe autant de morceaux. Parts égales [suivant ce] qu'il y a eu de monde pour la pêche -- femmes et enfants également, soit pour la grande pêche soit la pêche aux petits poissons. -- Trente-sept parts.

Aussitôt après ma vahine maniait la hache, fendait le bois, allumait du feu tandis que je m' "appropriais", me couvrais pour la fraîcheur de la nuit.

. . . Ma part de poisson cuite.

Le sienne crue . . .

Mille questions. Les incidents de la pêche. Vint l'heure du coucher. Une question me dévorait . . . A quoi bon?

Enfin je la fis:

-- Tu as été bien sage?

-- E[ha.]

-- Et ton amant d'aujourd'hui était-il bien?

-- Aita . . . Je n'ai pas eu d'amant.

-- Tu mens. Le poisson a parlé.

Sa figure prit un aspect qui m'était inconnu. Son front indiquait une prière. Malgré moi je la suivis dans sa foi. Il y a des moments où les avertissements d'en haut sont . . . utiles.

Contraste entre la foi religieuse, superstitieuse de la race et la scepticisme de notre civilisation.

Doucement elle ferma la porte et fit à haute voix sa prière .

Sauvez-moi! Sauvez-moi! Il est soir; il est soir des Dieux.

Surveillez près de moi, ô mon Dieu! près de moi ô mon seigneur. Gardez-moi des enchantements de mauvaise conduite.

De souhaiter du mal ou de maudire, des secrètes menées.

Et des querelles pour les limites des terres; que la paix règne bien autour de nous.

O mon Dieu! Gardez-moi contre le guerrier furieux, de celui qui erre furieux, se plaît à effrayer, dont les cheveux sont toujours hérissés. Que moi et mon esprit vivent.

O mon Dieu.

Ce soir-là je priai presque.

Sa prière finie elle s'approcha de moi résignée et me dit, avec des larmes aux yeux:

-- Il faut me battre, beaucoup me frapper.

Et devant ce visage résigné, ce corps merveilleux, j'eus le souvenir d'une parfaite idole. Que mes mains soient à jamais maudites si elles flagellaient un chef-d'oeuvre de la création. Ainsi, nue, elle semblait recouverte du vêtement de pureté jaune orangé, le manteau jaune de Bhixu. Belle fleur dorée dont le noa noa tahitien embaumait, et que j'adorais comme artiste et comme homme.

-- Frappe! te dis-je, sinon tu seras longtemps courroucé et tu seras malade.

Je l'embrassai et mes yeux disaient ces paroles de Bouddha:

C'est par la douceur qu'il faut vaincre le colère; par le bien qu'il faut vaincre le mal, par la vérité le mensonge.

Ce fut une nuit tropicale. Le matin arriva, radieux.

Belle-maman nous apporta quelques cocos frais.

Du regard elle interrogeait Tehamana. Elle savait.

Finement, elle me dit:

-- Tu as pêché hier. Tout s'est bien passé?

Je lui répondis:

-- J'espère bientôt recommencer.

Il me fallut revenir en France: des devoirs impérieux de famille me rappelaient. Adieu, sol hospitalier. Je partis avec deux années de plus -- rajeuni de vingt ans, plus barbare aussi et cependant plus instruit.

Quand je quittai le quai pour m'embarquer, Tehamana qui avait pleuré plusieurs nuits, lassée, mélancolique, s'était assise sur la pierre; ses jambes pendaient laissant ses deux pieds larges solides effleurer l'eau salée. La fleur qu'elle portait auparavant à son oreille était tombée sur ses genoux -- fanée.

De distance en distance d'autres aussi regardaient comme stupidement la lourde fumée du navire qui nous emmenait tous, amants d'un jour. Et sur la passerelle du navire avec une lorgnette nous pouvions voir sur leurs lèvres ce vieux discours maorie:

Vous, légères brises du Sud et d'Est, qui vous joignez pour vous jouer et vous caresser au-dessus de ma tête! hâtez-vous de courir ensemble à l'autre île; vous y verrez celui qui m'a abandonnée, assis à l'ombre de son arbre favori. -- Dites-lui que vous m'avez vue en pleurs.

APPENDICE

Après l'oeuvre d'art. La vérité, la sale vérité.

Parti de France avec une mission. Qui les obligeait à me la donner? Peut-être un avertissement à l'officiel?, avertissement de la foule qui scrute, fouille l'âme des artistes et plus tard fait loi.

Peut-être avec ce semblant de satisfaction, m'éloigner et ne me revoir plus jamais.

Et en me quittant: "N'ayez crainte de nous écrire, pour vous rapatrier comme nous l'avons déjà fait pour M. D. . . qui avait une mission au Japon.

Et quand vous reviendrez nous vous achèterons quelques-uns de vos travaux. Comme nous l'avons fait pour M. D.

Notre budget ne se distribue qu'*indirectement* . . ."

Qui m'obligeait à accepter. . . Je ne sais. . . Pauvre mais riche de mon art, je devais dans un voyage être obligé de recourir aux navires de guerre pour arriver à Tahiti, pour aller dans les îles voisines où je comptais étudier.

A mon arrivée à Papeete mon devoir (chargé d'une mission) était d'aller faire ma visite au gouverneur le nègre Lacascade -- célèbre par sa couleur, par ses *mauvaises mœurs*, par ses exploits antérieurs à la banque de la Guadeloupe, récemment par ses exploits aux îles Sous le Vent. Malgré toutes les récriminations du roi Pomaré, les cris de la colonie française à Tahiti, cet homme néfaste et incapable était inamovible. Partout dans le ministère on répondait invariablement "dettes à payer". N'obtenait une place du souverain distributeur que celui qui avait une femme ou une fille à lui offrir.

De part et d'autre quelle vénalité.

et pro Ce fut donc avec tristesse, et peut-être l'arrogance du
dégoût sur le visage que je fis ma visite chez le gouverneur le
nègre Lacascade.

Je fus reçu avec courtoisie -- du reste étant annoncé
comme peintre par le ministère des Colonies, avec défiance . . . ce
métier rare à Tahiti étant peu probable, celui d'espion politique
plus supposable.

Je me retirai: ce fut tout. Et tout le monde à l'envi de me
croire autre chose que je n'étais. Et cependant j'avais des
cheveux longs, point de casque blanc et surtout d'habit noir. J'eus
beau déclarer que je n'avais pas de subsides du gouvernement, que
j'étais pauvre, Artiste seulement, tout le monde se tenait sur le
qui-vive. C'est que dans une ville comme Papeete il y a beaucoup
de partis: Gouverneur, Maire, évêque protestant, missionnaires
catholiques, et Mesdames.

contin A ce point qu'un jour de fête du 14 juillet deux dames de
magistrats se crêpaient le chignon sur la place publique, se
jetant à la tête la faveur du gouverneur, et les maris,
d'honorables magistrats de colonies, prenant fait et cause pour
leur moitié se donnaient des coups de canne. Ce fut terminé
comme toujours par un renvoi de la colonie et ces messieurs
eurent de l'avancement.

voire On comprendra aisément combien j'eus hâte de fuir la ville
de Papeete, ses fonctionnaires et ses soldats . . . , d'aller étudier

et prouver enfin qu'en ce monde je n'étais *rien* : un homme libre, un artiste. Finalement on se rendit à l'évidence et les saluts disparurent.

Au bout de dix-huit mois, un magistrat honnête homme celui-là (mal vu probablement pour cela) s'émut des difficultés que j'avais à travailler et me conseilla de demander au gouverneur la place de juge de paix aux Marquises.

Elle était vacante depuis longtemps disait-il et il était nécessaire que ce poste soit rempli. Il était occupé autrefois par un imbécile et incapable de 1^{re} classe et malgré tous les refus du conseil général, le gouverneur avait placé là un favori -- puis l'avait rapatrié en France comme fonctionnaire avec tout le luxe désirable, cela sans aucun droit -- avec des fonds trouvés on ne sait où, et passés au chapitre des écritures: chapitre x... C'était presque une sinécure comme perte de temps et je pourrais ainsi continuer des *travaux utiles*.

C'était tenter vraiment le Diable. Cependant je refusai presque, demandant quelques jours de réflexion.

Une semaine après je fus obligé d'aller à Papeete.

Le magistrat me dit: -- Il faut battre le fer pendant qu'il est chaud. Le procureur de la république a vu dernièrement le gouverneur, lui parlant de votre affaire; ce dernier a répondu qu'il serait enchanté de vous être utile.

avec Immédiatement je traversai la place (ce dialogue se passait devant le palais Lacascade) et, honteux de demander quelque chose à un homme méprisable et (pourquoi dépend-on ainsi d'êtres méprisables?) qu'on méprise, j'entrai à la résidence.

situat Le chasseur remit ma carte au gouverneur et cinq minutes après me priait de monter l'escalier: le gouverneur daignait me recevoir. En effet, au haut de l'escalier, Lacascade -- comme toujours en redingote noire et pommadé -- me disait:

Gaug -- *Tiens, c'est vous Monsieur Gauguin . . .* Je ne m'attendais pas à vous voir et qu'est-ce qui vous amène?

Goug -- Tout simplement une demande à vous faire monsieur le Gouverneur. Comme vous le savez je suis artiste. Mes études à Tahiti sont terminées, et je voudrais aller aux Marquises continuer. On yient *de me conseiller* de vous demander la place de Juge [de] paix, place vacante depuis longtemps.

vide --Ah Monsieur Gauguin quelle folle idée vous passe par la tête! et qui peut bien vous l'avoir suggérée? Vous ne savez pas quelles *aptitudes* spéciales il faut avoir pour remplir ce poste délicat, et quelles études préliminaires, etc. . . . Non je vous le dis en vérité c'est impossible: ce serait une nomination qui ferait le plus mauvais effet.

acco J'étais en admiration du génie de ce fumiste qui en une minute, à premier examen, pouvait juger de mon incapacité et

Administrations

avec autant de courtoisie m'indiquait le mauvais effet que je ferais comme Juge de paix.

Je saluai et me retirai, comme le renard jurant qu'on . . .

Plus tard quand je dus rentrer, fort des promesses qu'on m'avait faites à mon départ, j'écrivis aux Beaux-Arts ma triste situation pour rentrer: voyage cher. . .

Cinq mois après j'eus une double réponse:

Des Beaux-Arts on demandait au cher collègue Monsieur Etienne des Colonies de faire le possible pour faire revenir M. Gauguin, Artiste Intéressant à qui on avait confié une mission.

Du secrétaire même demande à Tahiti: Monsieur le Gouverneur, nous vous serions obligés d'*examiner* s'il est possible de faire revenir . . . Ci-joint la lettre des Beaux-Arts.

Le Gouverneur fit son devoir, examina consciencieusement s'il était possible? Impossibilité complète. Malgré tous nos soins dans la gérance des fond qui nous sont confiés, la caisse est vide . . .

Me voilà encore pour six mois à Tahiti . . .

Avec force protections indirectes, démarches d'amis, le ministre de l'Intérieur signait ordre de rapatriement comme indigent en dernière classe. Chose qu'à l'étranger tout consul accorde aux Français égarés sans fortune, et cela sur une simple demande avec réponse immédiate. Quel trésor, quelle célérité nos Administrations!!

Ce qui fut commandé fut fait; le Gouverneur fit une demande au Commandant Manseron, commandant le *Duchaffault*, pour m'offrir l'hospitalité sur son bâtiment au gaillard d'avant, au poste des seconds maîtres.

Au bureau de l'Intérieur de Tahiti je fis tous mes efforts pour que la demande fût faite pour mon séjour au carré; peine inutile l'ordre était formel, signé apostillé.

Heureusement que le *Duchaffault* n'était pas un navire de la station locale -- que le Commandant n'avait pas d'ordres à recevoir de M. Lacascade -- heureusement que les officiers un peu au courant de ce qui se passe en France avaient entendu parler de moi comme Artiste, me reconnurent comme un homme comme il faut et de société agréable, et ils me prirent avec eux au carré.

En montant le Commandant, gentilhomme comme on l'est généralement dans le marine de l'Etat me dit:

-- Monsieur Gauguin, vous êtes ici le bienvenu.

Je fis le voyage ainsi jusqu'à Nouméa; ces messieurs firent tout ce qui était possible pour me rendre la vie douce. Ils se nommaient:

Monsieur Allemand, le *Second*

Faure

Martin

Clergeau

Quand Mazet retrouver c'est une mauvaise expression: je
sus qu'il en Godet.
Je suis heureux de pouvoir ici leur rendre hommage et
témoignage de toute ma gratitude.

A Nouméa obligé d'attendre vingt jours le paquebot et cela à
mes frais (pour un *indigent*, tel était mon rapatriement). C'était
dur.

Je partis enfin sur le paquebot des Messageries, si
luxueusement installé pour les premières et les secondes. Je
partis blotti devant, en 3e, parqué avec deux cents hommes de
troups ayant sur l'avant pour se promener 50 centimètres carrés
par homme, au milieu des chaînes des moutons et des boeufs. --
Quarante jours ainsi, Dieu que c'est long! Si ce n'était la mer on
reviendrait plutôt à pied . . .

Je suis enfin ici au milieu des miens et de mes amis. Et si
j'ai à me plaindre du silence de la direction des Beaux-Arts, *du*
manque à toutes les promesses faites à mon départ en mission,
j'ai eu de la part des artistes, des penseurs, etc. la seule
récompense de mes efforts intellectuels.

A bord je me retrouvai avec le nègre Lacascade qui se
dirigeait sur Mayotte où il est nommé, pour recommencer là
probablement de nouvelles dettes et remonter son sérail.

Quand je dis retrouver c'est une mauvaise expression: je
sus qu'il était à bord; des barrières indiquent aux passagers les
limites de leurs promenades. Un salon spécial est octroyé à nos
gouvernants, dont les balades ne sauraient être trop onéreuses.*



Figure 1: *Te Atua* (The Gods, 1891-1892), oil on canvas,
from two separate paintings of the same
title. The 17th Century of the Gods.

* The Appendix was taken from Jean Loize, *Noa Noa par Paul Gauguin* (Paris: Andre Balland, 1966).



Figure 1: *Te Atua* (The Gods); 1893-1894; woodcut from two separate printings of the same block; The Art Institute of Chicago



Figure 2: *Te Faruru* (To Make Love); 1893-1894; woodcut from two separate printings of the same block; The Art Institute of Chicago



Figure 3: *Mahna no Varua Ino* (Day of the Evil Spirit); 1893-1894; woodcut from two separate printings of the same block; The Art Institute of Chicago



Figure 4: *Noa Noa (Fragrant)*; 1893-1894; woodcut selectively heightened with watercolor; The Art Institute of Chicago



Figure 5: *Te Po* (The Night); 1893-1894; woodcut from two separate printings of the same block; The Art Institute of Chicago

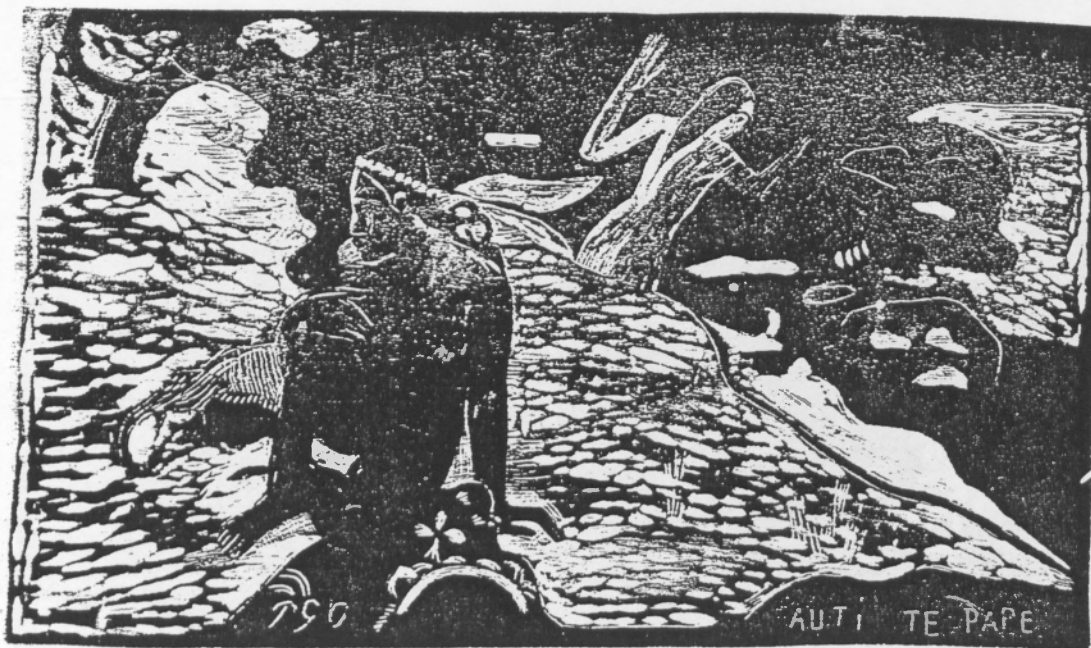


Figure 6: *Auti te Pape* (The Fresh Water is in Motion); 1893-94; woodcut printed over selectively applied brush; The Art Institute of Chicago



Figure 7: *Maruru* (To Give Thanks); 1893-1894; woodcut from two separate printings of the same block; The Art Institute of Chicago



Figure 8: *Nave Nave Fenua* (Delightful Land); 1893-1894; woodblock selectively heightened with water-color; The Art Institute of Chicago



Figure 9: *Manao Tupapau* (She Thinks of the Spirit of the Evil Dead); 1893-1894; woodcut printed in a combination of colors; The Art Institute of Chicago

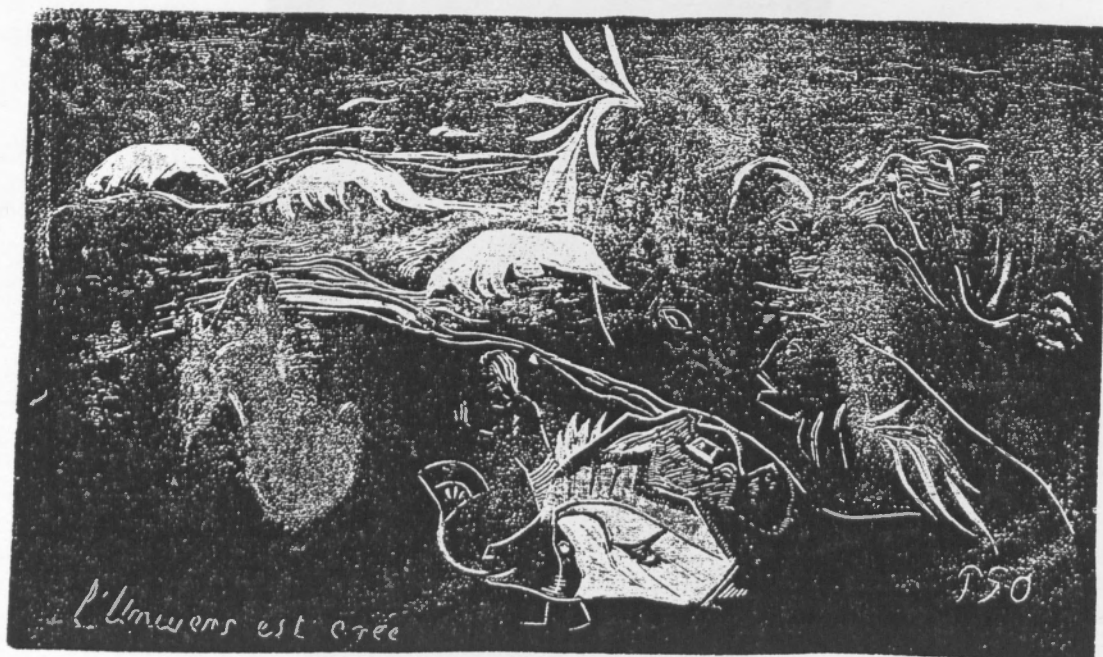


Figure 10: *L'Univers est Créé*; 1893-1894; woodcut from two separate printings of the same block; The Art Institute of Chicago



Figure 11: *Idol with a Pearl*; probably 1892; tamanu wood
polychromed with stain and gilding; Musée
d'Orsay, Paris



Figure 12: *Cylinder Decorated with the Figure of Hina*; probably 1892; tamanu wood polychromed with stain and gilding; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington



Figure 13: *Hina and Fatu*; probably 1892; tamanu wood;
Art Gallery of Ontario



Figure 13: *Hina and Fatu*; probably 1892; tamanu wood;
Art Gallery of Ontario



Figure 14: Reverse of Figure 13; probably 1892;
tamanu wood; Art Gallery of Ontario



Figure 15: *Idol with a Shell*; 1892; ironwood with mother-of-pearl and bone; Musée d'Orsay, Paris



Figure 16: *Idol with a Shell*; 1892; ironwood with mother-of-pearl and bone; Musée d'Orsay, Paris



Figure 17: *Vase with the figure of Hina*; 1893-1895; burnt clay; Museum of Decorative Art, Copenhagen



Figure 18: *Merahi metua no Tehamana* (Tehamana Has Many Parents); 1893; oil on coarse canvas; The Art Institute of Chicago



Figure 19: *Parau Hanohano* (Terrifying Talk); 1892; oil on canvas; private collection

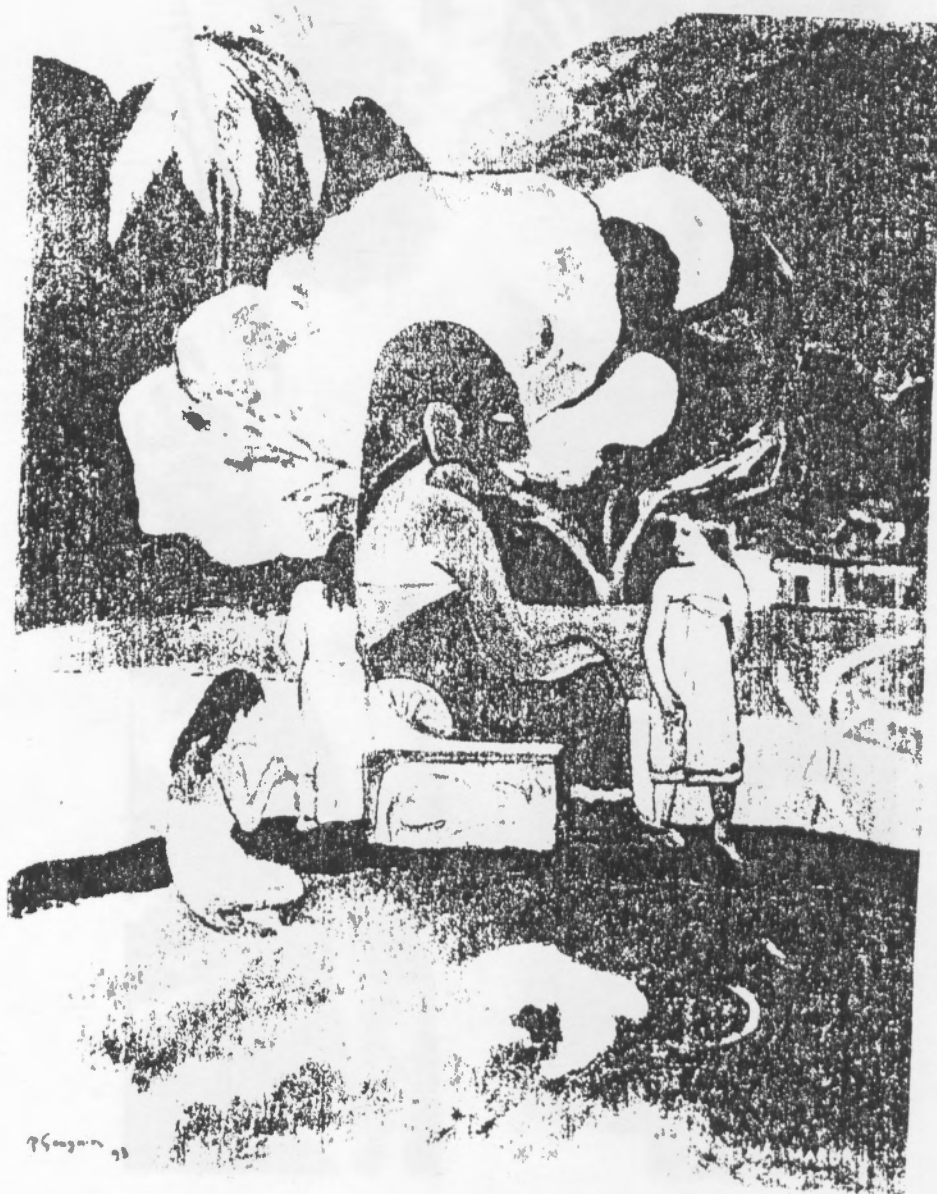


Figure 20: *Hina Maruru* (Festival of Hina); 1893; oil on canvas; private collection, USA

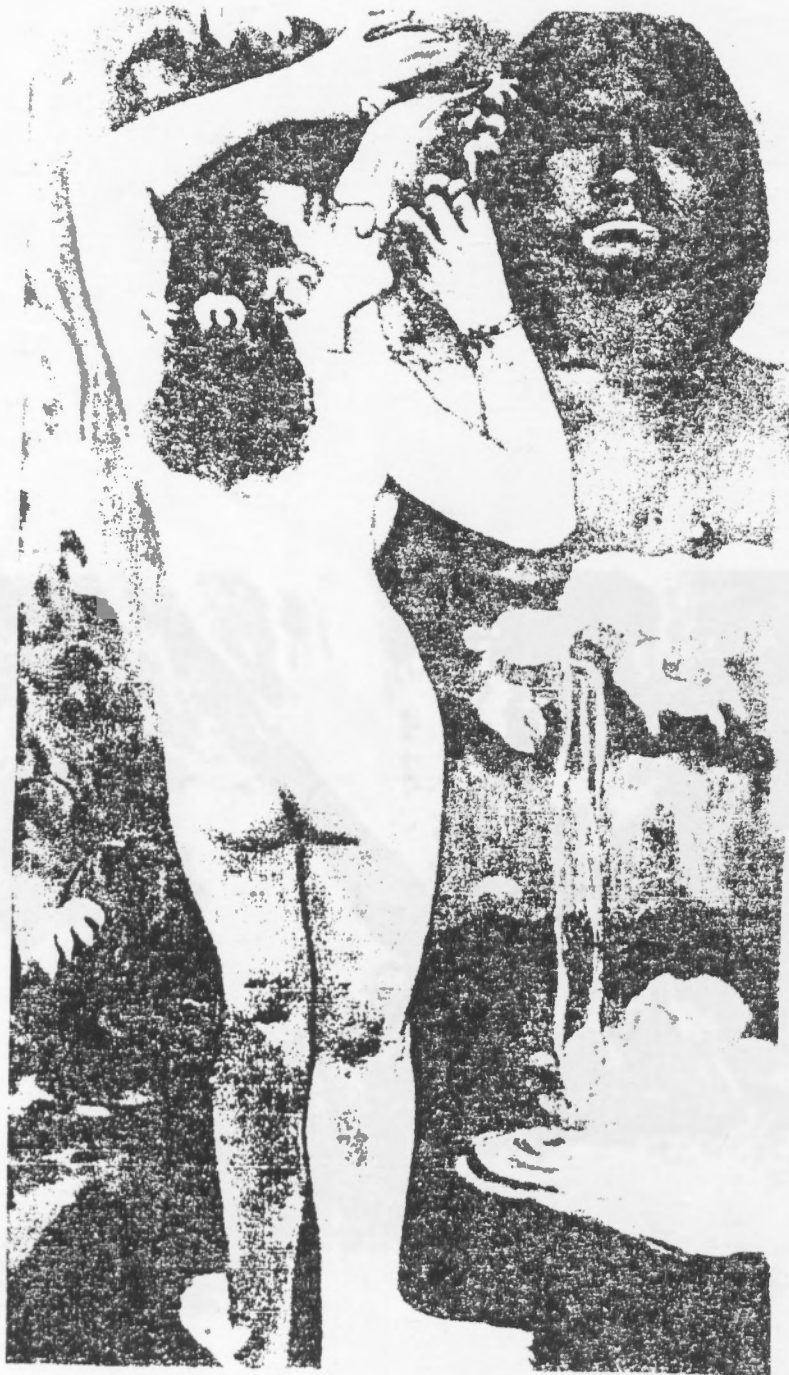


Figure 21: *Hina Tefatou* (The Moon and the Earth); 1893 oil on canvas; Museum of Modern Art, New York



Figure 22: *Upaupa* (Fires of Joy); 1891; oil on coarse canvas; The Israel Museum, Jerusalem

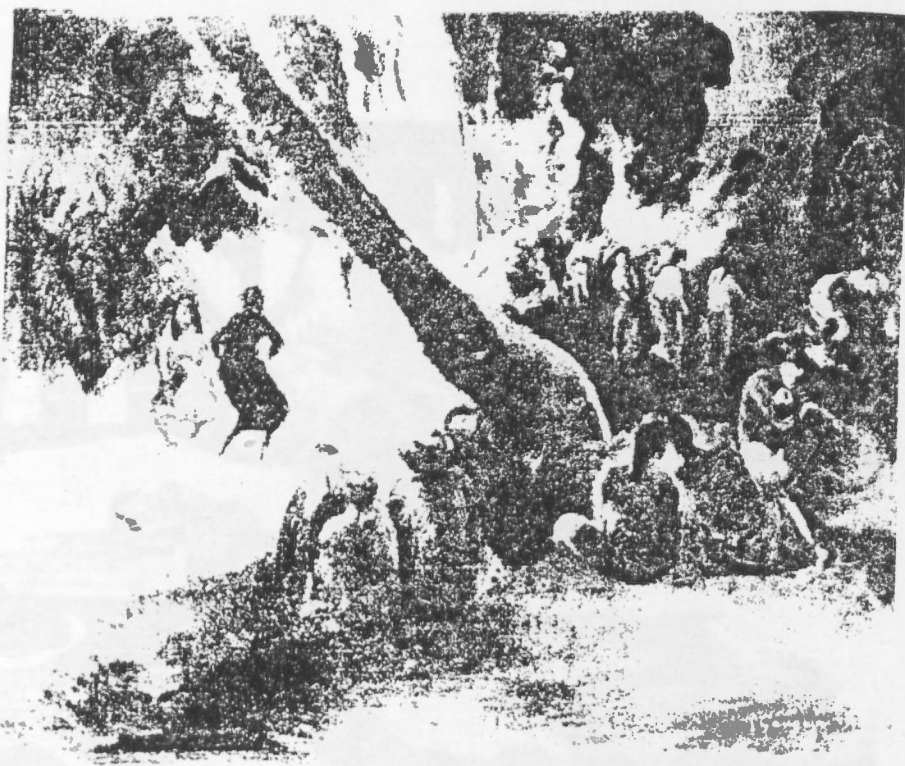


Figure 22: *Upaupa* (Fires of Joy); 1891; oil on coarse canvas; The Israel Museum, Jerusalem



Figure 23: *Mahana no Atua* (Day of the God); 1894; oil (possibly mixed with wax) on canvas; The Art Institute of Chicago



Figure 24: *Te Faruru (To Make Love)*; 1892; gouache;
Museum of Fine Arts, Springfield



Figure 25: *Te Faruru* (To Make Love); 1894; watercolor transfer on japan paper; Collection of Edward McCormick Blair

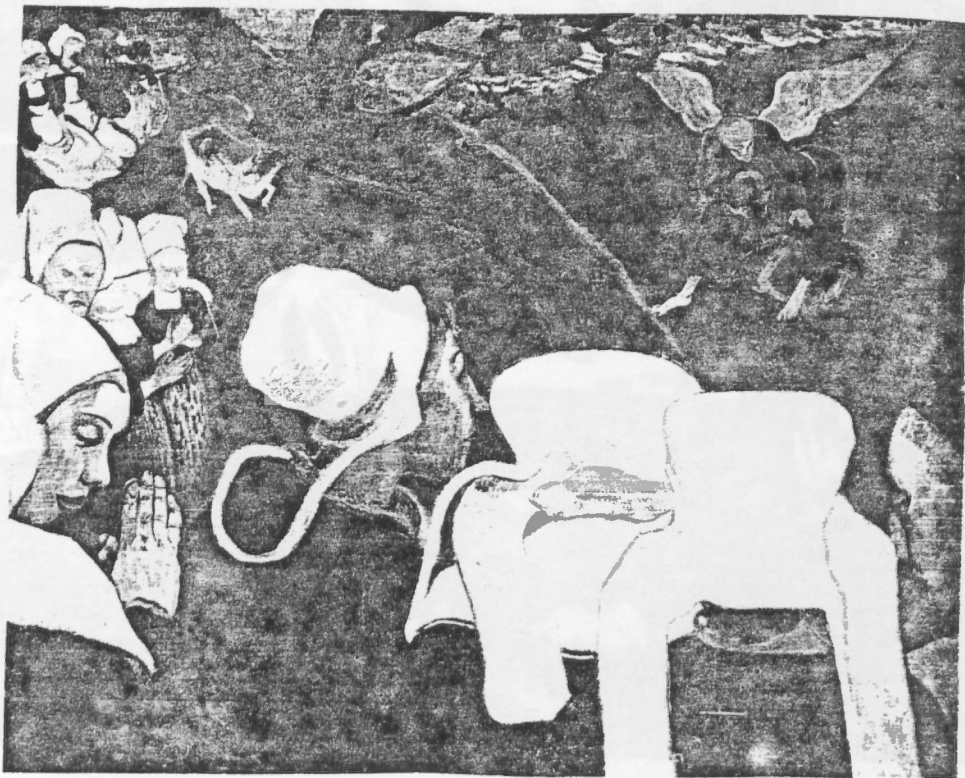


Figure 26: *The Vision after the Sermon* (Jacob Wrestling with the Angel); summer 1888; oil on canvas; The National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh



Figure 27: *Tahitian Pastorals*; 1892; oil on canvas; State Hermitage Museum, Leningrad

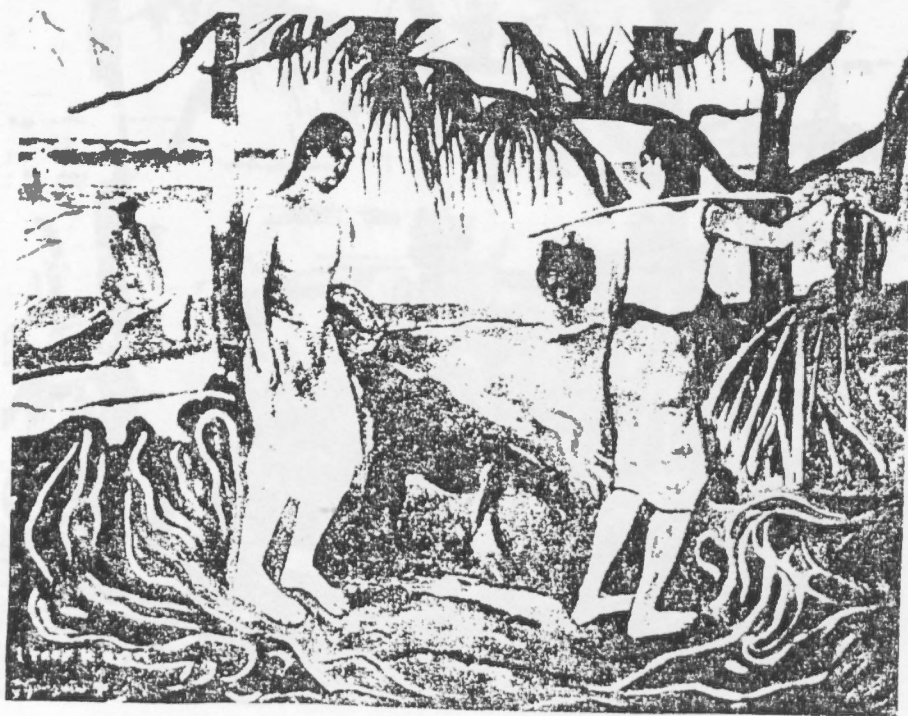


Figure 28: *I Raro te Oviri* (Sous les Pandanus); 1891; oil on canvas; collection of David M. Levy

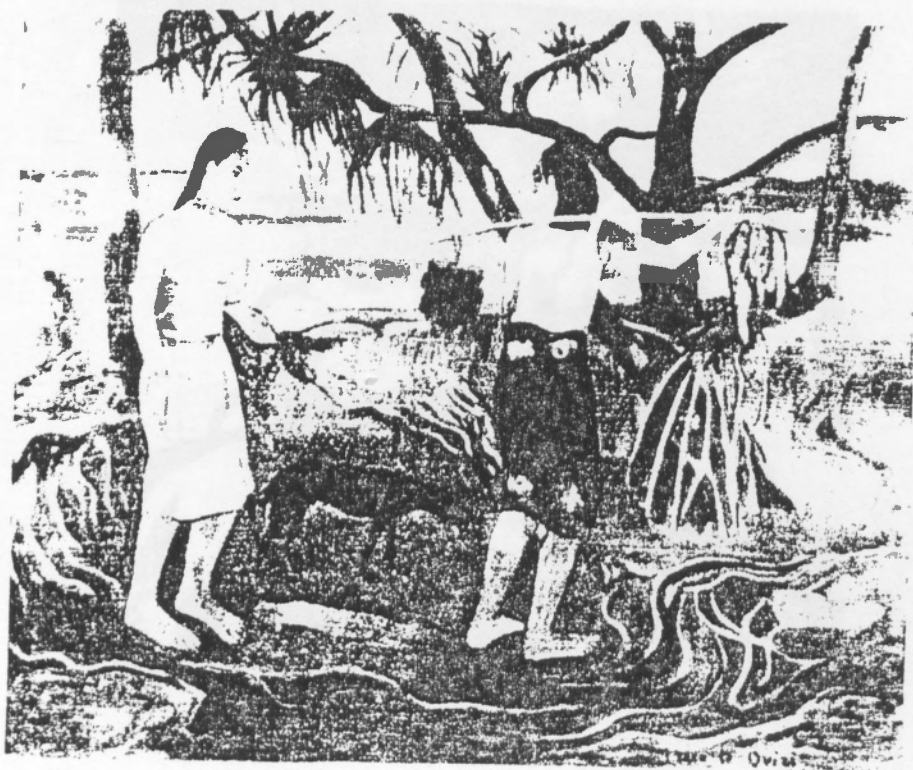


Figure 29: *I Raro te Oviri (Sous les Pandanus)*; 1891; oil on canvas; Minneapolis Institute of Art

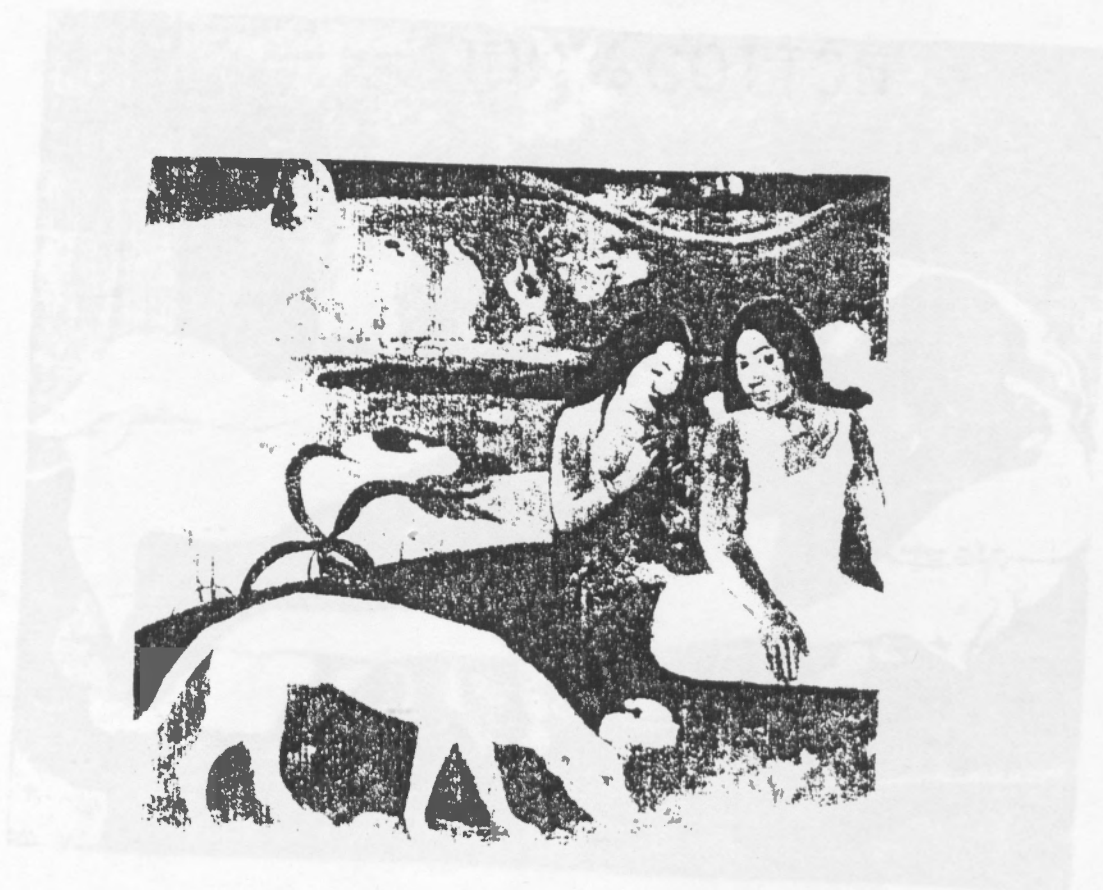


Figure 30: *Arearea* (Amusements); 1892; oil on canvas;
Louvre, Paris



Figure 31: *Manao Tupapau* (She Thinks of the Spirit of the Evil Dead or The Spirit Watches over Her); late 1892; oil on canvas; Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo



Figure 32: *Parau na te Varua Ino* (Words of the Devil); 1892; oil on coarse canvas; National Gallery of Art, Washington



Figure 33: *Nature Morte aux Fleurs et a l'Idole*; 1892; oil on canvas; whereabouts unknown



Figure 34: *Fatata te Miti* (Near the Sea); 1892; oil on canvas; National Gallery of Art, Washington



Figure 35: *In the Waves (Ondine)*; spring 1889; oil on canvas; Cleveland Museum of Art

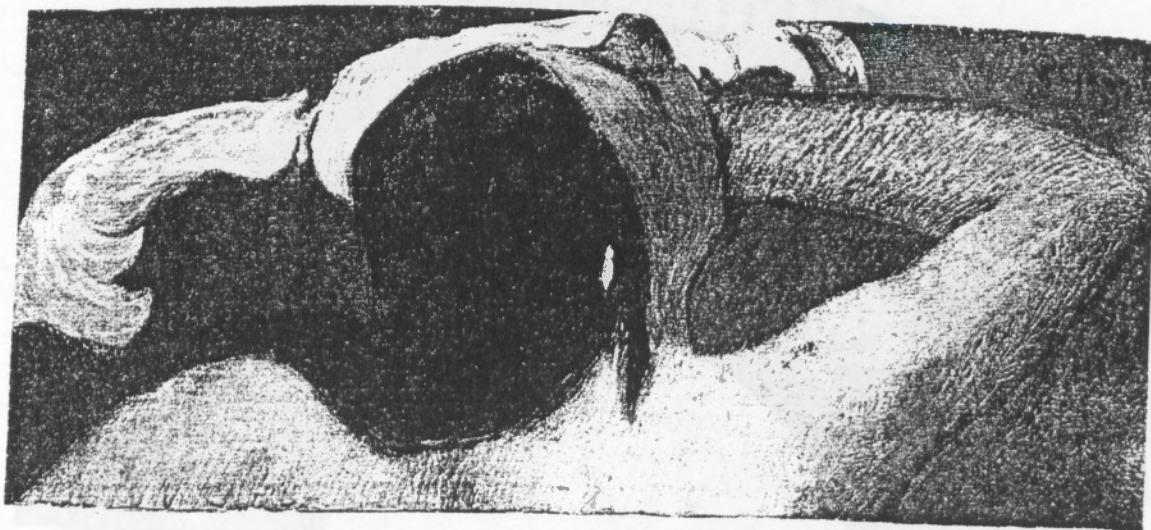


Figure 36: *Woman in the Waves (Ondine)*; 1889-1890;
pastel on wove paper; Josefowitz Collection



Figure 37: *Fan with Woman in the Waves (Ondine)*; on canvas
1889-1890; graphite, brush and gouache with
pastel on green bristol board; Collection of
Mrs. Francisca Santos

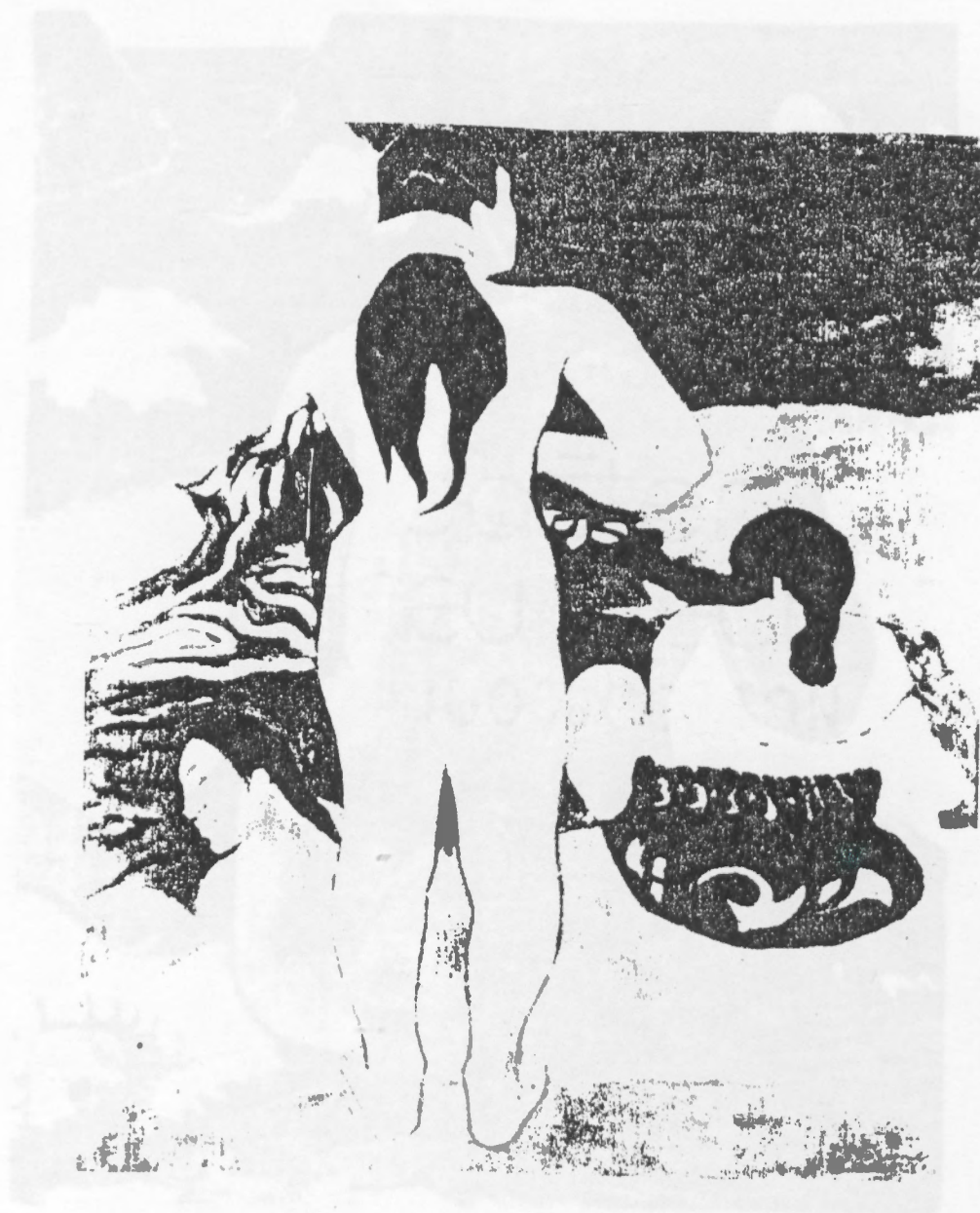


Figure 38: *Tahitian Women at the Beach*; 1892; oil on canvas;
Collection of Robert Lehman, New York



Figure 39: *Vahine no te Miti* (Woman at the Sea); 1892;
oil on coarse canvas; Museo Nacional de Bellas
Artes, Buenos Aires



Figure 40: *Aha oe Feii?* (What! Are You Jealous?); 1892;
oil on coarse canvas; Pushkin State Museum
of Fine Arts, Moscow

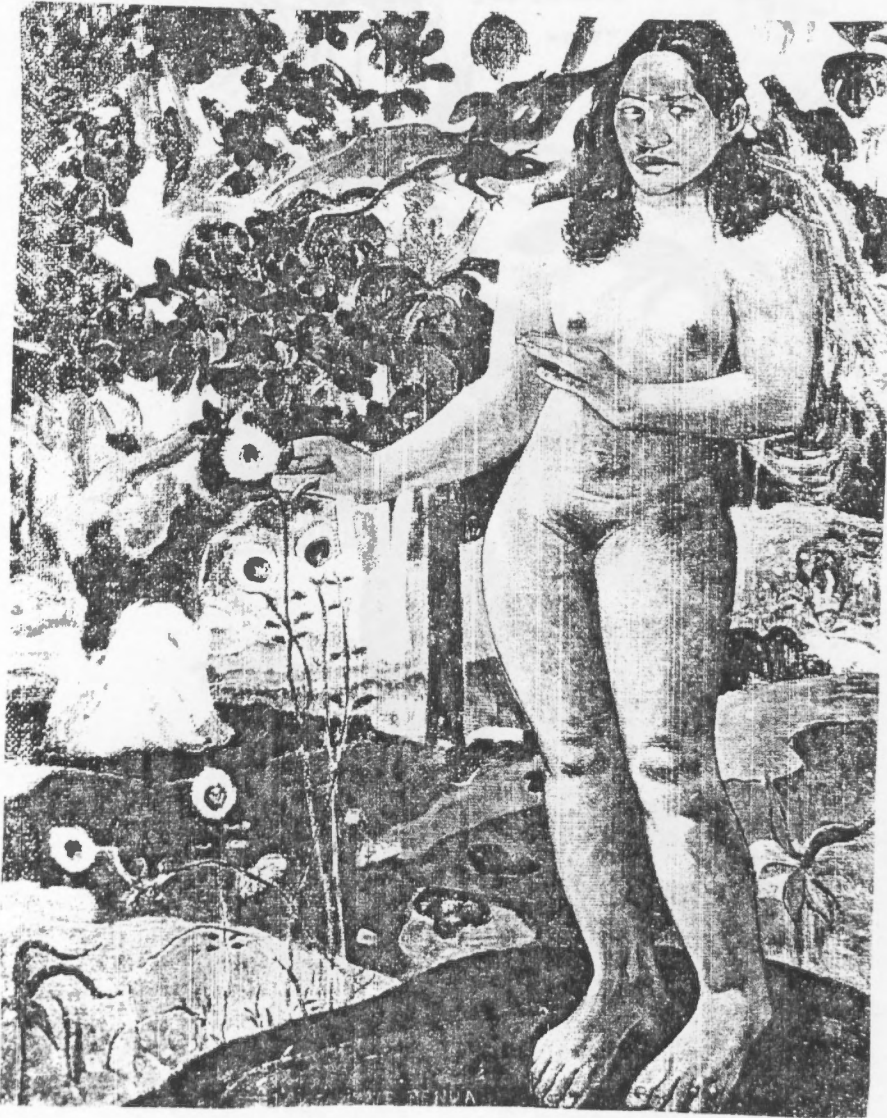


Figure 41: *Te Nave Nave Fenua* (The Delightful Land); 1892; oil on coarse canvas; Ohara Museum of Art, Kurashiki, Japan



Figure 42: *Te Nave Nave Fenua* (The Delightful Land); probably 1894; brush, gouache, and india ink on wove paper; National Gallery of Art, Washington

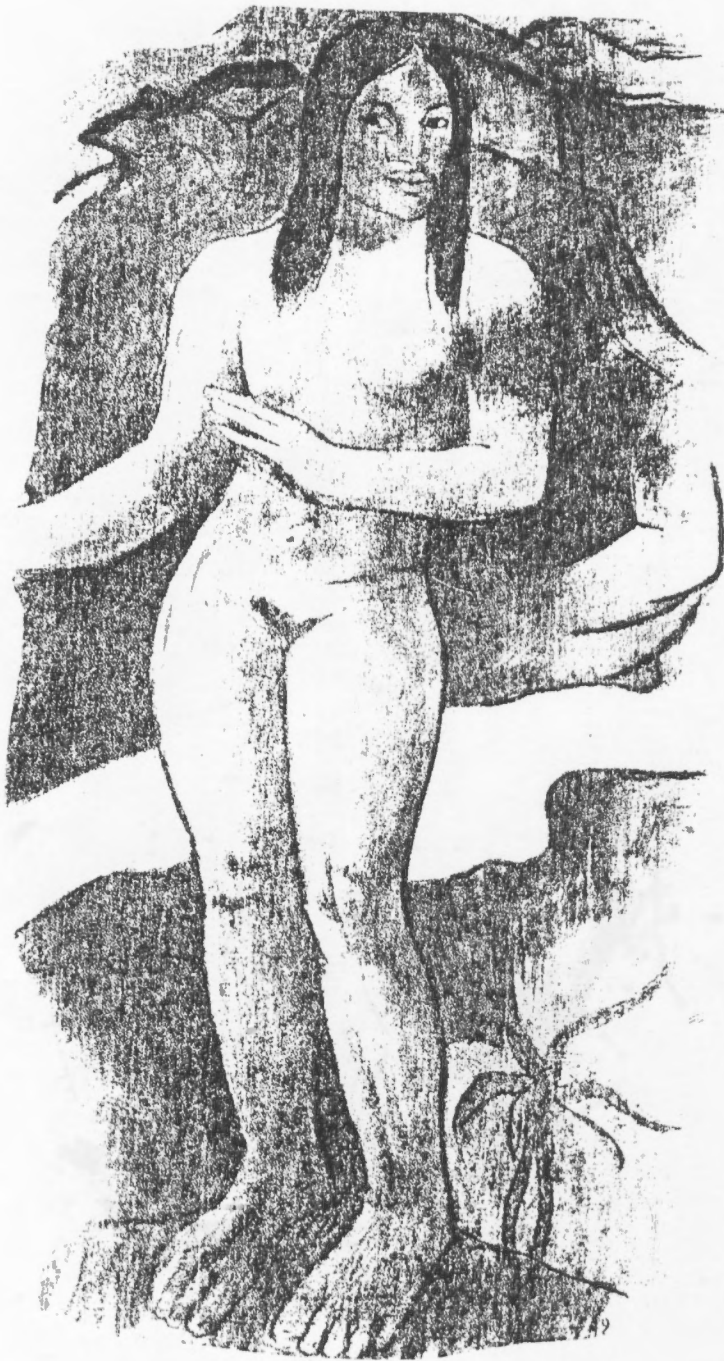


Figure 43: Reworked study for *Te Nave Nave Fenua* (The Delightful Land); 1892, reworked around 1894; charcoal and pastel with brush over black chalk on wove paper; Des Moines Art Center



Figure 44: *Crouching Seated Figure and Head of a Woman*; 1892;
black chalk on wove paper; verso of Figure 43



Figure 45: *Te Nave Nave Fenua* (The Delightful Land); around 1894; charcoal on laid paper; British Rail Pension Fund Collection, London



Figure 46: *Standing Tahitian Man Swinging a Hatchet and Two Seated Women*; charcoal on laid paper; verso of Figure 45.



Figure 47: *Matamoe* (Death); 1892; oil on fine canvas; Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow



Figure 48: *Man with an Axe*; 1891; oil on canvas; collection of Alex M. Lewyt



Figure 49: *Contes Barbares*; 1892; oil on canvas; private collection, Paris



Figure 50: *Manao Tupapau* (She Thinks of the Spirit of the Evil Dead or The Spirit Watches over Her); 1894; woodcut printed over watercolor on japan paper; Collection of Edward McCormick Blair



Figure 51: *Manao Tupapau* (She Thinks of the Spirit of the Evil Dead or The Spirit Watches over Her); 1894; woodcut printed over watercolor on japan paper; The Art Institute of Chicago



Figure 52: *Eve*; 1889; pastel and watercolor; Marion Koegler
McNay Art Institute, San Antonio



Figure 53: *Life and Death*; spring 1889; oil on canvas;
Mahmoud Khalil Museum, Cairo



Figure 54: *Copy of Manet's Olympia*; 1891; oil on canvas;
private collection



Figure 55: *Pape Moe* (Mysterious Water); 1893; oil on canvas;
Bührle Collection, Zurich



Figure 56: *Self-Portrait with Halo*; late 1889; oil on oak;
National Gallery of Art, Washington

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